

LETTERS FROM MARY

BY
CRISSIE Y. SHANK

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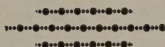
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INTRODUCTION

By Clayton F. Yake

To the thousands of girls to whom life is just beginning to give an opportunity for service this book, depicting life in India as it would be seen thru the eyes of a missionary's daughter by an author who is exceptionally adapted to teenage writing, should have a gripping fascination. It portrays actual life in so realistic a way that it appeals to you from the very first word and does not fail to hold your interest to the very last.

"Mary" has the accomplished ability of telling things in an attractive way. She arouses one's sympathy for those living in a non-Christian land by describing the pathos of their suffering, their grotesque institutions and their fantastic habits of thought. Then, too, she takes the discouraging features of the missionary's life and looks on the brighter side, even tho she does not enjoy them. She is just a missionary's daughter going with her missionary parents to India, and when she goes has no desire of ever becoming a missionary. Do you think she retains this idea? The answer is found in her letters which are an interesting study in the development of her life purpose.

Scottdale, Pa.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

There are many books on India and Indian Missions. At the same time there is great ignorance not only among young people but even among church leaders in the homeland, of missionary life as it actually is and of practical missionary tasks as they are being carried on among people and in a country so essentially different from our own. To present, therefore, the subject of our own mission in India anew, to help in making all India and the people of India interesting and alive, and to stimulate to the study of the missionary work of the Church, the letters in this book were first published in "The Youth's Christian Companion" and at the request of the editor of that paper and others are now collected into one volume.

The incidents used in the letters are accounts of actual occurrences and are not the creation of the imagination. The facts presented have been gathered from many sources, to all of which it is almost impossible to acknowledge the author's indebtedness. Some are from the letters of missionaries now serving well on the field. A number have been gathered from the columns of the religious papers and from the Annual Reports of our India Mission. Many of the statements given have been taken from "Modern Hinduism" and "Hindu Mythology" by Wilkins, "India and Christian Opportunity" by Harlan P. Beach, "India Awakening" by Sherwood Eddy, "India and Missions," and "India's Place in the World." The letters lay little claim to originality but are largely a compilation, in a new form, from these various sources, presenting the results of the labors of others. In order to make the letters more instructive

and helpful a number of photographs have been added, most of which have been taken by the author or missionary friends.

It should be stated that local differences are so many and so marked that it is almost impossible to generalize with complete accuracy on any subject connected with India, and while the letters have tried to tell "things just exactly as I see them," they are mostly the things about a very small district in the Central Provinces of India. Moreover, the foreigner in India can at best know but little of the customs and manners of the Hindus. We can be acquainted with some prominent facts, but a definite understanding of their manner of thinking and of their domestic habits and religious ceremonies must be lacking.

"Mary" has no one counterpart in actual life but is a number of characters summed up in one. The letter form of presenting the facts has been chosen as being an easy way to help the imagination in forming the mental pictures of things in India.

It is hoped that this book will serve the purpose of helping in some small way to a better understanding of our Mission work in India, to a more intelligent and prayerful support of that work, and to some young person's cheerful going to that field of labor where "the harvest indeed is plenteous but the laborers are few."

Crissie Y. (Shank.

Orrville, Ohio.

LETTER NO. I.

San Francisco, Cal., May 6.

DEAR COUSIN ANNA:—

At eleven o'clock we are to set sail. Father and James have gone out to make some last arrangements for our baggage and for funds for the trip while Mother and I are here at the hotel to write some good-bye letters to our friends. I don't know whether I'm glad or sad. I don't seem to have the least bit of a missionary feeling in spite of the fact that "Missionary" is stamped across the face of our passage tickets, but I suppose Father and Mother have—they've planned and waited so many years to go to India.

Yesterday afternoon we went with Father and James to see our ship. It is a Japanese boat 440 feet long, 50 feet wide, and it has a speed of about twenty miles an hour. Each cabin has an electric fan and electric lights and some sort of heating arrangement, so I suppose we are to be comfortable whether the weather is hot or cold. Father and James have the cabin just across a narrow passage way from the one Mother and I occupy, and both cabins are light and well ventilated, having a port-hole opening on to the promenade deck. There is a wireless telegraphy apparatus and an ice-making

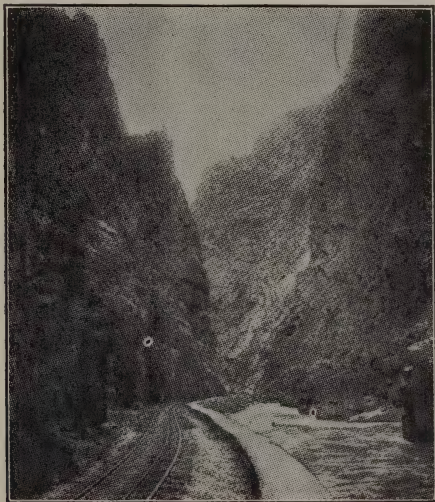
plant on board, and then there is a ladies' room, a library, and since the boat does not carry second-class passengers we are to have the best there is. I hope they make sure that we shall have a good supply of fresh food.

I cannot describe our trip to the coast for the scenery was most beautiful and beyond the power of words to describe—rivers and cascades and canyons and swirling rapids and green mountains and snowy ranges and rocks and forests and cattle ranches and mines and shimmering salt beds and orchards and vineyards. One night James got off of the train at a little station and brought in a handful of snow for us to taste. It was on the Continental Divide and about two miles above sea level. Our engine puffed and tugged up the Atlantic Slope and then rushed down the Pacific.

For twenty-four miles and through the Grand Canyon of the Arkansas River an open top observation car was attached to our train that seemed to cling to every twist and turn. The red granite and gneiss walls sparkling with mica towered above, on either side of us nearly half a mile. Straight above, the sky looked like a mere thread and the stars could be seen though it was nearly noon. I must ask father the reason for that. I was too busy looking to talk, then. At one place in the Royal Gorge at Hanging Bridge the passage is only ten yards wide and the railroad is actually built out over

the boiling, foaming water. There was nothing but rocks to be seen ahead, but the river found a way through and in the narrow space between the rock wall and the mad river the train found its way.

I did want to stop in Salt Lake City and see



Royal Gorge

"The passage is only ten yards wide." the Mormon Tabernacle and Assembly Hall and Brigham Young's Quarters but I don't believe they could be more interesting than the Lake itself. For eleven miles the railroad crossed through the Great Salt Lake and the waves tossed on either side of

our train, sometimes whitening our windows with spray. You know I'm always wondering "how big" and "how many" and "how much." Well, the lake is one hundred miles long and sixty miles wide in places. It is six times as salty as the ocean and the only living thing in it is a very tiny shrimp. Near the lake there were miles and miles of flat salt beds that looked like white, hard-packed snow and James asked if all the salt in the world was held in storage there. We passed almost through the middle of this mass of salt that is sixty miles long, eight miles wide, one to fifteen thick and ninety-eight per cent pure.

Don't forget to write me every week, Anna! Just think, the letter you write to me this week—maybe you have written it already—won't reach me for nearly two months! And do ask me all the questions you ever think of, or that the other girls think of. I'm afraid there'll be so many new things that I'll forget to tell you some of the things we've asked each other so often but wouldn't ask a missionary when we did see one. I really think we were foolish to be half-way afraid of a missionary. And I'm going to write you *things just exactly as I see them*, not fixed up for a missionary meeting or calculated to make folks feel sorry for but interested in the poor heathen.

Tell Uncle Jacob and Aunt Martha and John

good-bye for us and don't forget to tell me about our Missionary Society every month.

Ever your loving cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. II.

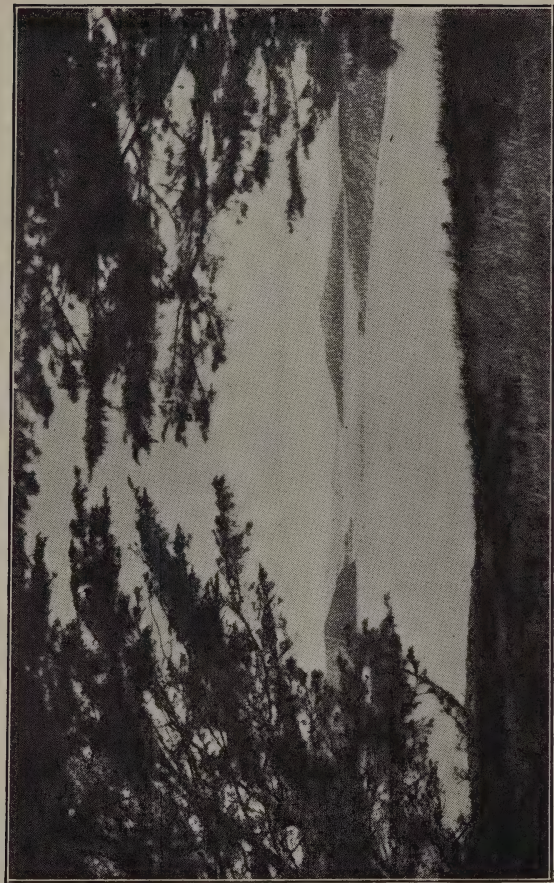
Nearing Honolulu, Hawaii, May 12.

DEAR ANNA:—

We are to reach Honolulu shortly after dinner and our steamer makes only a short stay but I think it will be long enough for us to get a glimpse of the Hawaiians.

Leaving San Francisco was going to be a great event I thought. You know Grandfather and Grandmother were there and there was a large crowd on the pier watching and waving while our vessel slowly got under way and headed through the Golden Gate. We soon left them behind and our ship kept moving westward past the Farralon Islands while we stood on the deck gazing toward where we last saw the United States, and then—well, suddenly I felt a queer lump coming into my throat and decided I'd better go alone at once and investigate our cabin. I don't need to tell you why. Anyhow I can tell you from experience that it isn't fun to leave America, and when I next saw Mother I could see there had been some tears in her eyes.

When I did finally investigate our cabin, the room in which we sleep, our trunks were stowed away under the lower berth and there were drawers into which we could put some of our clothing. It



Golden Gate, San Francisco, California

was quite roomy and comfortable looking, that is, as roomy as a space seven feet square can be with two beds in it. And then dinner was ready and we went to the dining saloon which isn't a saloon at all but only the large dining room where all the passengers eat together. The waiters are all Japanese, dressed in white, and they seem to exert themselves to wait on us. The "Boy" (as they are all called) who waits on us seems never to forget our comfort or convenience, and he is so courteous that I believe it might not hurt me to imitate that characteristic of his. Of course he gets paid for it, but if a Japanese can be courteous for money surely I can be courteous without it. I don't suppose it will make my skin yellow or my eyes slanting, do you? for I don't particularly admire those characteristics of his.

We have seen a fish called the porpoise in great numbers. They are about five feet long, black above and gray on the sides, and they belong to the same family as the whale. They have to come to the surface of the water very often to breathe and look like horses galloping along beside our ship. (I wonder if you can pronounce porpoise correctly.)

We have seen many flying fish too trying to escape from our boat. They look rather small but some of them are said to be about eighteen inches long. Their large fins enable them to keep themselves up in the air, sometimes as far as two hundred

yards, and so they can get away from other fishes, especially the porpoise. I tried to get a picture of them but all you can see is a splash on the water.

The seagulls from the island coasts are following our ship again, swooping daringly down into the waves beside us, soaring about us, and then swinging in circles far out to sea. They are bluish gray in color and are very graceful on the wing, sailing and poising, and flinging and darting untiringly. I think I'll choose to be like the seagull instead of like the dove. I like it better because it is unafraid and eager to dare the sea and the storm. You can be like the gentle dove. I'm going to be like the gull and dare and do.

Next time I'll write you things as I saw them at Honolulu.

Your affectionate cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. III.

Nearing Yokohama, Japan, May 22.

DEAREST ANNA:

Hawaii is lovely, charming, wonderful! I've been dreaming about it ever since we left and while we were there I felt like singing for sheer joy, because life seemed so good. There was not the rush and noise of our country, but a drowsy, peaceful sort of atmosphere, in a climate like the most perfect May Day you can imagine. And everywhere there were soft, feathery ferns and palms and trees and shrubs and vines; and there were the most peculiar and fragrant and brilliant flowers.

How the Hawaiians sing! I've never heard music quite the same as theirs, sort of a sweet, sad music.

There are thousands of acres of pineapples and we have been having Hawaiian pineapple to eat every day since we left—fresh, ripe, juicy pineapple! Yum! Yum! Oranges, limes, grapefruit, alligator pears, papayas, mangoes, bananas, watermelons and other common fruits. I didn't get to see either a papaya or mango tree so I'll tell you about them when we get to India.

And the fish! We had time for but one outing and we went to the Aquarium in a tropical looking park called Kapiolani, where we saw a collection of fish said to be, because of their bright colors and queer forms, the most remarkable and beautiful in the world. I never could have imagined such odd shapes and the colors are all the hues of the rainbow that look as if they had been painted on and yet I'm sure no painter could put on colors as they are. The fish all have long queer names that I cannot remember, but I wish you might have seen the black one with rich, shaded, chiffon fins and tail; and the one with wonderful colored dots all over its body. And then there were the Octopus or Devil Fish having eight arms each with two rows of suckers. They were fierce looking creatures and while we were looking at them one darted straight at me as if he wanted to wind all his arms around me. I was glad there was glass between him and me anyhow.

The park is along the bathing beach at Waikiki where we saw the surf boaters and surf board riders. The whole beach is enclosed in a great barrier reef of coral, there is no undertow and no danger. The surf boaters start their canoes from the outer reef and so turn them in front of a breaker that the wave drives them straight to the shore. Adepts take a long pointed board and standing upon it let the wave drive it upon the sand. The fine beach

and warm water were tempting, but we had to hurry back to our ship.

James and I decided that it would be fun to be missionaries or church workers or something in Hawaii and we told mother we were both going there to work after we had gone back to America and finished school. But Mother told us in that



A Pineapple Field

quiet way of hers that we couldn't be missionaries for fun and that if there wasn't a real reason for us to stay at home that we ought to go to one of the lands where so many people are unhappy and are dying unhappy. She told us that a king by the name of Kamehameha abolished idolatry throughout all the Hawaiian Islands in 1819. Then the first missionaries went there from America in 1820

and began teaching the people. Now more than half of the people are Protestant Christians. There



A Bungalow in Hawaii

are great numbers of Chinese and Japanese who generally hold to their old religions, and there are

some Catholics. Mother said that we could work for God at home or any place, but that things were not divided up even, with so many more workers at one place and so much more and harder work at another place like there are in the world to-day, and she said that we ought to help even it up somehow. But maybe there'll be a good reason for me to stay at home.

These ten days at sea have been very much alike, long, luxurious, glorious days. But they have been days in Wonderland or rather Wonder-water, to me. Most of the time there has been scarcely a ripple on the shining surface of the great, peaceful Pacific, and it looks as if one could skate right away to the horizon. And just think how broad the ocean is! A voyage lasting a week and three days without seeing land! The Captain says the weather on this trip has been the most agreeable he has ever seen.

But I lost my birthday! I really lost it! This is how it happened: We have been sailing "out into the West where the sun goes down" to the point where the West meets the East and away out somewhere in mid-Pacific we crossed the 180th meridian. There we left the West behind us and dropped a day from the calendar and that day was my birthday. But since I couldn't have a birthday party for you and John or even a birthday

cake with sixteen candles, it really doesn't make any difference I guess.

The ocean is "blue," just as blue as ink, when you look straight down into it.

But I can't write another word for James says we can see Japan and I want to be the first to see Fuji.

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. IV.

Off the Japanese Coast, May 25.

DEAR COUSIN:

I have seen Fujiyama the sacred mountain of the Japanese people, but I had to be shown. It was beautifully clear when we entered the harbor at



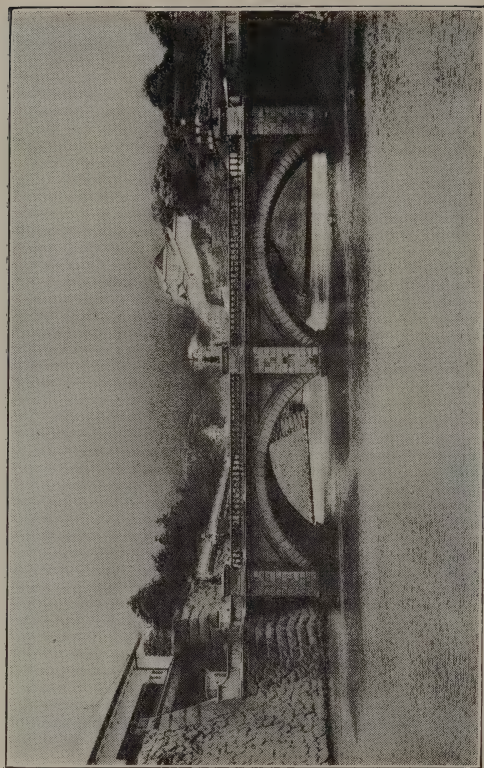
Fuji from Tagonoura

Yokohama and the Japanese passengers were very enthusiastic about their king of mountains when I got out on deck after sealing your last letter. I could hardly make out the hazy outline of the shore and then a vague outline of bluish hills, the farther range of which seemed pale and milky and part of

the floating clouds, but I couldn't make out anything that looked like a snowy peak twelve thousand feet high, though I looked and looked in the direction in which everyone else was looking. And then a dignified old Japanese gentleman said, "Oh, you must look above the clouds!" And there, high above the clouds, with its snow-capped peak like the petals of a great lotus flower, stood old Fuji! No wonder the Japanese are enthusiastic about it!

We are actually in Japan, the Flowery Kingdom, the Land of the Chrysanthemum and the Rising Sun! And it is more bewitching and fairy-land like than you can dream. The cherry blossoms are gone and the Chrysanthemums are not yet blooming but there are peonies and wistaria and iris in bloom. Everyone seems to be happy for the streets are full of polite, courteous little people smiling and saying nice things to each other. The women and girls are very pretty in their rainbow colored kimonos and stilt-like wooden sandals.

We took several short trips to the business part of Yokohama and visited some of the shops with their ivory, silver, brass, silk, porcelain, bronze, paintings, and curios. I've found some things I'm saving to show you. Oh, I know we're not away for just a little visit and coming back soon. We're almost three weeks from home and we're still going! But anyhow, I bought a little image of three monkeys to bring with me when I do come. One mon-



Imperial Castle, Tokio

key holds his hand over his eyes, one holds them over his ears, and the third holds his hands over his mouth. These monkeys are to be seen in nearly every shop and illustrate an old saying, "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil."

One day we all went to Tokio, eighteen miles from Yokohama and a fifty minutes' trip by train. We went to the railroad station in a jinrikisha, more commonly known here as the "riksha." The natives haul you about for a very few sen. (You don't know what a sen is, do you? Well, find out.) And they seem to have the rikshaws everywhere all the time. It is a very comfortable way of riding, too.

In front of a modern depot of stone a porter with red cap and brass buttons was ringing a big bell. And then there was a loud whistle, a banging of doors, and we were on our way in a little railway coach containing two seats which run the length of the car. Beside mother sat an elderly Japanese lady in a beautiful dove colored silk kimono and next to her was a girl about my age in a kimono of deep purple and gold brocade. I did want to talk to her! Across from us sat an old gentleman who took a pipe and tobacco box out of his girdle and smoked; near him was another old gentleman reading a Japanese newspaper while his little boy sat beside him holding some bundles in his sleeves; and at the other end of the seat were three school-

boys in the dark blue uniform with bright buttons that all schoolboys wear.

We passed many little rice fields that were flooded with water and that were laid out like a big checkerboard.

The people, both men and women, dressed in blue and white with white cloths or big straw umbrella-looking hats on their heads, were weeding in the fields. And where the country wasn't marshes



Japanese Students

it was hills that were terraced to the very tops to make tiny level fields. The villages looked as if they had come right out of a picture book with their clean bird-cage houses.

In Tokio we got a good view of the outside of the Imperial Palace. It is in the central part of the city and is guarded by moats which surround it so that no one can get nearer than the entrance which is formed by twin bridges.

And then we got some letters of introduction and were allowed to go into the Imperial University where we saw some interesting things. There are



Huge Statue of Buddha

about three thousand students and I got a picture of some of them near the science buildings.

Oh yes, and best of all we were invited to tea

at the home of the President of our Steamer Company. The house was all so clean-looking you hated to step on the porch but you didn't get a chance to step inside for some little maids came and took off our shoes and put on some nice straw sandals instead. I won't try to describe the house with its paintings and silk tapestries and images. Instead of hanging paintings on the walls they have paintings on sliding panels that take the place of doors in our houses, and often the whole solid walls are painted. Painted screens are also a part of the decoration of the rooms. It was like a dream house. Two pretty little daughters came in, bowed until their heads touched the floor, and then brought us some tea in tiny bowls and some cakes.

In one of the parks where we had dinner under an arbor of wistaria we saw a huge statue of Buddha who is worshiped by so many of the Japanese.

It's getting so windy I can't hold my paper any more and I don't want to go into our cabin.

Lovingly yours,

MARY.

LETTER NO. V.

Hong Kong, China, June 10.

MY BELOVED COUSIN:—

We did have a real storm between Yokohama and Kobe. I stayed out on deck as long as I could and after all the other women had gone in but I soon had to go to our cabin and that upper berth where I was glad to stay. The next morning I felt pretty limp and weak-kneed but we all dressed early for we reached Kobe in the night, and about six o'clock we went ashore where we saw a very pretty waterfall.

Between Kobe and Nagasaki we went through the Inland Sea, a distance of 240 miles. Romantic and picturesque are the words that I think of that best describe it. There are about a thousand oddly shaped islands and islets in the Sea and each one we could see seemed the most beautiful. At one point the shores were so close that we could have thrown a stone over the water on either side of the boat. We could not go ashore at Nagasaki for we stopped only long enough to coal.

We stopped in Shanghai a few hours, long enough for us to go ashore and buy sun hats. Father's and James' are white-covered cork and Mother's and mine are ugly, heavy things made out of sola pith and covered with coarse white cloth



Chinese Women Eating With Chopsticks



Colporteur and Bible Woman

too. There are some other missionaries to India on board with us and they said we have to wear these *topis* from now on until we leave India again.



Chinese School Girls

But I see people with nothing on their heads here in Hong Kong and I don't see why we couldn't get used to it too. I think I'll try it some time.

We have been waiting here seven days for a steamer to Calcutta; tomorrow we are to leave and not one of us is sorry. The season to enjoy Hong Kong is from October to May, but now with the temperature about ninety degrees and the air very moist it is too uncomfortable to see the interesting things that are here or to do anything but stay under the electric fans in our hotel rooms.

Hong Kong, meaning the Land of Sweet Waters, is an island about ten miles long and four miles wide, with a population of about 350,000. Most of the people are Chinese, but there are Japanese, English, Americans, and I think almost every nationality must be represented. There are many Indians who have yards and yards of cloth bound about their heads like that missionary showed us.

The longest trip we took was to Victoria Peak which is that part of the city where pretty summer homes have been built to get the benefit of the winds, and we found it much cooler up there 1300 feet above our hotel. We went up by a wire-rope tramway in a few minutes and then after it was cooler we walked down a shady, winding road in a half hour. The view over the city below us, and over the sea with its islands and the harbor with its boats I shall never forget.

One evening we spent in the Botanical Gardens where we saw the Tree Fern, Bamboo, Lotus,

Cocoanut and Sago Palms, and so many queer looking trees and plants.

In both Shanghai and Hong Kong there is a settlement of Europeans with well kept and well lighted streets, pure water, good police system, and all the other things we have in our cities; and then there is a Chinese City with narrow alleys swarming with people and dirt and smells and noise. Anyhow I'm glad we're not stopping in China—the



A Chinese Village

people are so dirty and there are so many crying babies and crippled beggars. But James says he likes the Chinese because they are quiet and respectful and civil, and because they are contented and energetic at work.

One evening I went with Father and Mother to a Missionary Conference where there were a lot of pale, tired, faded-out-looking missionaries. But they were glad-looking too and after awhile I saw only

the glad look and not the faded-out part. One of Mother's old college mates and her husband have been in China for two years and they gave us some interesting pictures of their work. Don't you think so? And no wonder missionary folk are a glad-looking set if they can help to make people look and live like clean Christians instead of dirty heathen.

I haven't had any lotus seeds or bamboo shoots or roast pigeon Mongolian style or shark fins or bird nest soup yet, and the eating is fairly good. Only sometimes the food is so hot with curry and spice that it nearly takes my breath. James says I have to finish my plate of food even if it does make the tears come for I won't get anything else but curry and spice in India. But I don't believe it!

Your loving Cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. VI.

Penang, Straits Settlements, June 24.

DEAREST ANNA:—

We have been within one degree of the equator and now we have come north again about 500 miles. We stopped at Singapore for several days to shift cargo and found it very damp and warm, but the nights were cool enough to sleep and they weren't at Hong Kong. It rained every day we were there and they say it rains practically every day in the year. The city is not on the Malay Peninsula but on a small island lying off the southern point.

The name Singapore means "The City of Lions" but there are only tigers and no lions on the island. But there are elephants and James saw some of them at work.

One afternoon we went to the Botanic Gardens in double rikshaws. The road was made of a red-colored stone and was lovely and wide and smooth and for over three miles our coolies, one for each rikshaw, trotted along without ever stopping. In the gardens are rubber trees from all parts of the world, a lake with such large lilies, and many giant trees all so tropical looking.

But the busy streets gave you a different im-



Elephant Stacking Timber

pression—such a din and turmoil! Such a picture of gay head-dresses and bright clothing! Such a motley crowd of humanity passing and repassing and thronging everywhere—Malays of different tribes, Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Armenians, Parsees, Arabs, and Jews.

I didn't even know there was such a place as Penang, but it's here, a good harbor on a little island close to the west shore of the Peninsula. Mother and I went ashore for a little while but it is raining all the time and there is nothing worth seeing anyhow. There have been so many new and strange sights that I haven't had time to think, but now I have to sing pretty hard and write pretty fast to keep a queer feeling away. Oh no! I'm not homesick! But I wish I could go with you out to the hay-mow and talk and hear some sensible sounds instead of all this hubbub.

This steamer is really only a cargo boat and the only passengers beside ourselves are another missionary and his wife, an English captain and his wife and a business man from Australia. There were about forty first class passengers on the steamer to Hong Kong and we learned to know each other real well. There were two girls who came to Shanghai with their Mother who is a missionary too. They had been in America a year and they said they wouldn't stay in America if they could. Well, I know somebody who wouldn't stay in Japan

or China or the Straits Settlements if she could help it! Here's hoping India will be better. Tomorrow we leave for Calcutta and in four days we will be there. Until then,

Good-bye!

MARY.

LETTER NO. VII.

Calcutta, India, June 30.

MY DEAR ANNA:—

A storm at sea is terrible and I never want to be in another! The first evening after we left Penang it began to get rough and until we entered the Hooghly River yesterday morning early we had such a storm as I could not have imagined. The ship rocked and rolled, and pitched and tossed, and seemed so helpless and frail. Yesterday morning we saw above the water the smokestack and two masts of a vessel that had sunk, but ours stayed on top all right, most of the time at least; and our captain said she rode the water like a duck. But the waves kept dashing against our port holes and the cabin was too close to breathe freely. Part of the time I felt I didn't care anything about the ship—"sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish," it was all the same to me. Part of the time I was just able to get out on the upper deck where I could fight off the sea-sickness better. But through all those five days Mother lay in her berth and was the sickest, palest looking person I've ever been around.

One morning I started out to take my salt water bath and I got one unexpectedly on the way to the tub. A big wave completely covered me, but



Bullock Cart, Calcutta

by the time I had recovered from the suddenness of it, it was gone again and I didn't have time to rub it in.

Calcutta is not situated on the Bay of Bengal as I thought but on the Hooghly River, a branch of the sacred Ganges and one of the principal channels of the Ganges delta. It is about fifteen miles wide at the mouth and the one hundred miles from its mouth to Calcutta were smooth sailing again. How glad we were you cannot know! But we had one very exciting experience when we almost ran into another vessel. At this time of year the river is treacherous and we sailed ever so slowly and even then almost collided.

While our steamer was on her way up the river a Custom's Declaration form was handed to each passenger to fill up. Our baggage was all exempt from duty except for a gun and a revolver that Father brought along for wild animals.

We are staying at the "Lee Memorial Home" where Mr. and Mrs. Lee and several other missionaries are working. They have about three hundred girls in the institution who are being trained in school, in Bible work and in Christian service. About twenty years ago six of the Lee children perished in a landslide in the Himalaya Mountains where they were going to school, and this large Mission Home is a memorial for those children.

Yesterday evening I went with Father to see

the sights and to purchase some necessities for use on the way to Dhamtari—bedding, soap, towels, lunch basket, and food. There is much of interest in Calcutta. Including its suburbs there is a popula-



"The monument is pathetic"

tion of nearly a million and the public buildings are really imposing. It is called the "City of Palaces," and the houses of the British quarter are of brick, elegantly built, in large grounds, and many of them like palaces. But the quarter occupied by the na-

tives has narrow, crooked, ill-kept streets and Oh, Anna, it's almost as bad as China!

In the very heart of the business quarter with magnificent stores and offices is the site of Old Fort William and of the disaster of June, 1756, marked in the pavement in front of the Post Office and the Custom House. In a side entrance to the Post Office we saw where the position of the Black Hole has been located and perpetuated by a marble tablet. And nearby is a monument raised to the memory of the 123 who died during that awful night when 146 Europeans were thrust into a twenty foot square cell. The monument is not beautiful but it is pathetic. From that year Calcutta has developed and progressed.

One of the missionaries from Dhamtari came to the steamer to meet us and to help us in traveling. We are to leave for Dhamtari soon after noon and it is dinner time now.

With much love,

MARY.

LETTER NO. VIII.

Dhamtari, C. P., India, July 1.

MY DEAR COUSIN ANNA:—

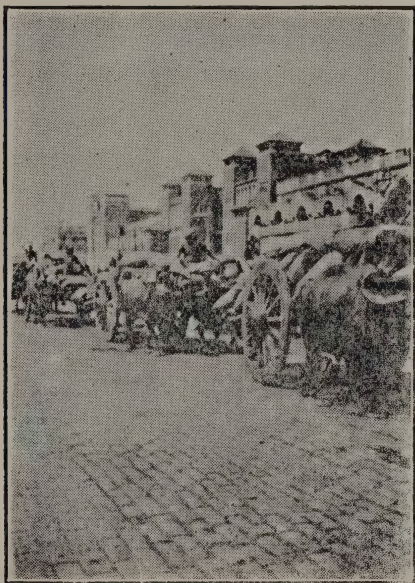
Eight weeks ago today we left San Francisco and we are actually in Dhamtari! I can hardly believe it even with all these strange things around me. Just think of having to call this “home” and of having to live with such strangers! But to begin with everything seems just as I pictured it, the rice fields, the natives, the houses and all have that Indian appearance that I expected and yet there’s something altogether different; there’s either something more than I was looking for, or something less—anyhow there’s a difference that I can’t explain. I guess

*From Greenland’s icy mountains,
From India’s coral strand,”*

put some ideas into the back of my head that don’t fit with what is here, anyhow I don’t see any “palmy plains” or smell any “spicy breezes” here at Dhamtari. And I can’t see any difference in the people. I thought one could easily know the different castes, but everybody, Mohammedans, Hindus, Brahmins, and Sweepers, as far as their dress and general appearance go, all look very much alike to me. And yet they are as far opposite one another as an

American and a Frenchman. But we are in India and it's altogether different to anywhere else I've been. But more about Dhamtari next time.

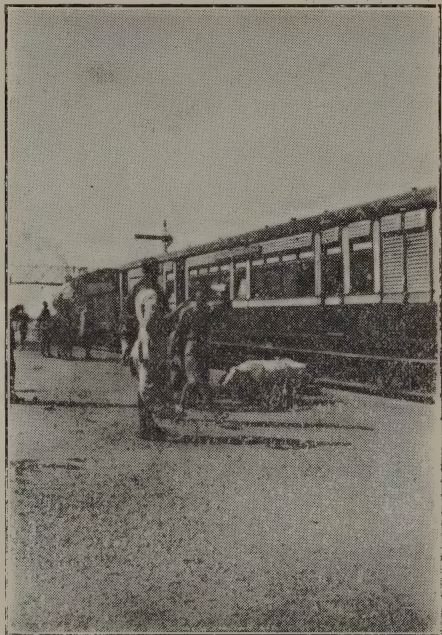
We went to the Howrah railway station yester-



Howrah Railway Station

day in a cab like the picture I'm sending. It is right across the River Hooghly in the suburb of Howrah and we crossed the river on a large bridge the sup-

ports of which rest on small boats in the river. There was a great crowd of Indian travelers and



Third Class Carriage

James found out that on an average twenty-two thousand passengers arrive at and leave this station daily and of this number less than one hundred are

Europeans. They all seemed very patient and content to wait. The fare charged to third-class passengers in India is less than a half cent a mile—lower than anywhere else in the world, they say. First-class tickets cost about eight times that much.

The missionaries usually travel third-class but we took a second-class carriage because Mother was very tired as a result of her sea-sickness and the seats in the third class are not at all comfortable. We were alone in our compartment and there were three seats lengthwise and two upper ones to let down at night. So we all lay down during the night and slept quite comfortably.

Just out of Calcutta the scenery was really beautiful, ponds by the hundreds, palm trees and banana plants by the thousands and green rice in the water-covered fields. And then we went through a coal-mining district with here and there a tunnel. While we slept we went through tangled jungles with big game of all kinds even to man-eating tigers; and when we woke in the early morning there were flat rice fields running out from the railway as far as we could see. James and I were in the upper berths and were talking across in whispers wondering about the trees that looked like home and about all the people. We saw in all our trip only a few people and we couldn't imagine where all these three hundred million keep themselves. And then after the train had stopped some

little time at a station James called out excitedly, "Why here's Raipur!" The names of the stations are not called out as they are at home and how the people ever manage to get off at the right place I don't know. Such a scramble to get shoes on, and bedding tied together, and baggage straightened out! We had about two dozen pieces with small trunks, suitcases, bags, baskets, blanket rolls, etc.

I was so disappointed not to see something of Raipur for it is a place of some importance and the chief town and Governmental headquarters of the division in which Dhamtari is located. But we had to run across to catch the little train for Dhamtari and then it took us until almost twelve o'clock to travel these last forty-eight miles. It seemed we never would reach here.

I'll have to wait until next week to tell you about our arrival.

Yours lovingly,

MARY.

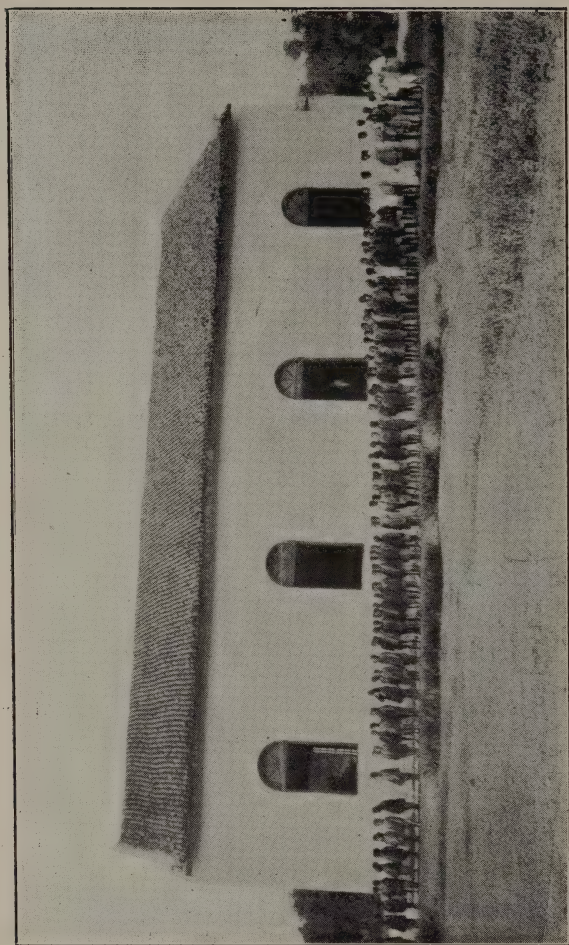
LETTER NO. IX.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, July 8.

MY DEAR COUSIN:—

I promised to write to you this time about our arrival at Dhamtari. Well, our train did finally reach the Dhamtari station, very slowly and cautiously it seemed, and all the missionaries had come to meet us. They looked just like the ones we saw in China, tired and worn and thin and pale and faded as if they were working so hard that they didn't have time to care much about any thing else. I thought I didn't know but one of them and none of them knew me but they were so jolly and happy and full of laugh that I felt right away that I must have been mistaken and that they were relatives of ours. The men were dressed in hot weather clothes—white drilling suits, the women were in plain light dresses, and all wore about the same kind of ugly topi (sun hat).

And when we were all done shaking hands, James and I got into the back seat of a tonga which looks like a big cart with a prairie schooner top. Mother and Father got into another and we were going over smooth, hard roads, past ponds with water lilies and tiny mud houses with children playing in the mud. Everybody went to the same bungalow



"The boys from the orphanage all lined up"

and we all had dinner together, breakfast they called it. Some servants in white turbans and coats brought in and passed all the food without saying a word and the women didn't seem to have any housework at all to do. But I'm finding out already that even if they do have a cook and a table boy, it takes them a long while every day to get things in running shape, order the supplies, give food to the cook for each meal, see to boiling the drinking water, etc., etc. We had a good breakfast of something that tasted like cream of wheat but wasn't, roast venison and gravy, mashed potatoes, fried eggplant, sliced cucumbers, and mangoes.

After breakfast we went to the Church house across the road. It is built of brick, plastered and whitewashed inside and outside and one can see the red tile roof between the rafters for there is no ceiling. The floor is of hard mud and there are about a dozen rough benches around the sides but the people all sit on the floor in rows. Father asked them why they did not have enough benches for every one, and they said, "We can't afford them." It looks very much to me as if they need a new Church building too for the rain somehow comes in all around the roof and the walls are brown streaked and cracked and not any too safe looking.

The boys from the orphanage all lined up and went over before we did and when we came in they stood up and salaamed to us. The building

was filled. And then some one introduced us all and Father and Mother spoke, one of the missionaries translating after each sentence. I was asked to say a few words, but I'm not a missionary just yet, you know.

Then we all went back to the other bungalow and had tiffin together—tea with milk and sugar, butter sandwiches, cake, and bananas. We stayed in Dhamtari over night and started for Balodgahan the next morning, and about this place, more later.

Affectionately yours,

MARY.

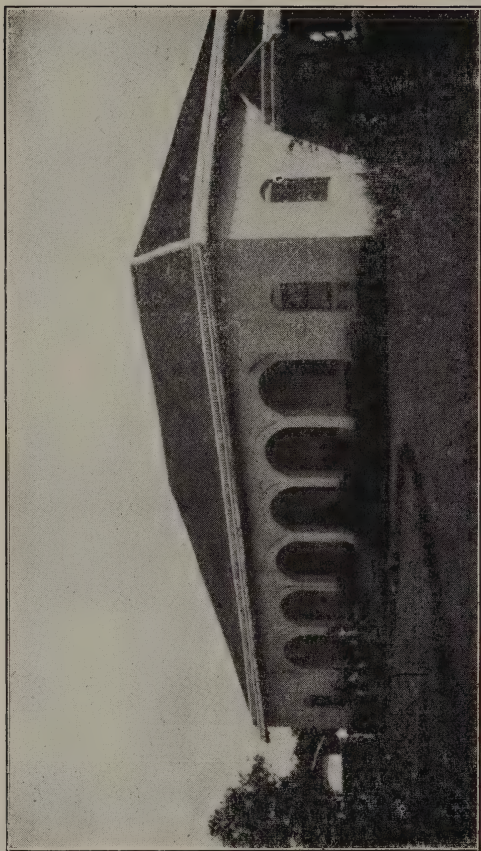
LETTER NO. X.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, July 15.

MY DEAR COUSIN:—

I am writing this in the place where we are to live. Don't you wish you could see it? Here it is, big and white, built of brick, plastered over with mud and lime both inside and outside, and slightly sloping tiled roof. There are seven rooms, two of which are lower, besides verandas, a pantry, and bathrooms; the sitting room opening upon the large front veranda, back of that the dining room opening upon the small back veranda from which one can see the kitchen, on the west side of these two rooms we have, on the east three rooms—an office and two bedrooms—used by another family. The walls are whitewashed, and the floors are cement covered with a very coarse bamboo matting. The ceilings are of heavy, coarse cloth, whitewashed also.

The rooms are large and lofty and barny looking, and when we came ours were so dreary and desolate and uninhabitable appearing that I didn't see how we were ever going to make them look comfortable and cozy and home-like. There is a window in each room which opens on hinges like a door and the upper part of each door is of glass.



"The place where we live"

Our rooms were provided with necessary furniture—tables, chairs, beds, a book-case, and three wall cupboards. The beds are all single, and are just a low wooden frame across which is stretched coarse hand-woven tape, and then there is another second-story frame over which is hung mosquito netting.

Our heavy baggage came the other day and now if one doesn't think too much about the cozy little houses at home our rooms look nice though not at all stately. The few pictures on the walls help so much and we are gladder than ever for the new ones our Sunday school classes gave James and me. My Madonna picture hangs over Mother's study table and the one of the boy Jesus among the doctors is at the head of James' bed. The ferns and palms and crotons on the veranda and in the windows look almost luxurious, and the large compound is filled with trees and shrubs and beautiful roses. And there is a pitiful geranium that looks so stunted and homesick and out of place that I don't think it can ever bloom. If it isn't moved I'll get homesick too.

James said he thought the missionaries lived in little mud houses. Of course I knew better than that but I couldn't see why the rooms are so large and high until Father explained that they are built for use and not for pleasure or beauty. They are built for the hot weather and are large so they will hold just as much oxygen as possible. And I

guess if you were shut up in a house from eight to five o'clock every day for about three months with the thermometer outside over one hundred degrees, and your life depended on the oxygen the house held you wouldn't care much if the rooms were handsome or not.

The kitchen, you know, is about forty feet away from the dining room, but it isn't called a kitchen at all and it really isn't one I guess. It is called a cook house or a *bawarchi khana*. *Bawarchi* means cook and *khana* means house. Well, one of the first mornings we were here after I saw the cook shut the door and start for his house I went out to see the little open stoves built up at the side like the picture in "Stories from India," and what do you think? There wasn't any Indian fireplace at all but an American steel range. And they say all the missionaries have American stoves now. I was disappointed! But I found the other things all right. There was a thin, shriveled-looking piece of mutton, and a bone for soup, some greens, a slice of fly-specked pumpkin, some overgrown radishes, a little brown salt in lumps, some cinnamon, cloves, ginger root, and coriander seed, all tied up together in a dirty rag that looked like the dishcloth. The spices were wrapped separately in dusty leaves, and then when I saw the floor and the cooking pans I decided I didn't want any breakfast. But one can't starve and when the food came to the table it tasted

good and I tried to forget how it looked before it was cooked.

Letters from home came this week and I have read them all over again and again. I can tell you you'll never know what it means to get letters from home until you are half-way around this old world from there. And do you know some of the missionaries hardly ever get letters from home any more? I guess they would feel like jumping up and down for joy if they were to get both arms full of good encouraging letters just to be read and enjoyed and not ask for an article or something to read to a Sunday school class or something else they don't always have time for. It's time for tiffin.

Affectionately,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XI.

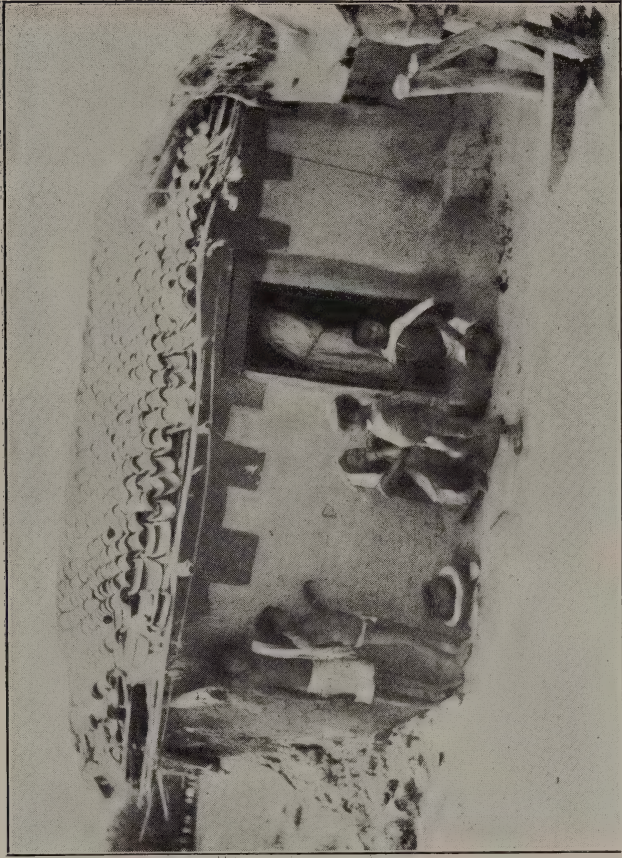
Balodgahan, C. P., India, July 22.

MY DEAREST ANNA:—

Imagine you are in Balodgahan with me will you and remember that Balodgahan is one of the nicest villages about here. Some of the streets aren't more than four feet wide I think, and just now they are all deep mud. The houses are built of mud with grass thatched or tiled roofs, most of them consist of only one or two rooms and are without any contrivance to admit light or air, so that when the door is closed they are quite dark. Then there is often a small veranda and a mud wall enclosing a tiny courtyard.

There are about five hundred and fifty people in the village, one fifth of whom are Christians, and there are ten different castes. It doesn't seem as though there were more than sixty houses.

One missionary writer says that seventy-seven per cent of the total population of India live in villages, something like this one, of less than two thousand people; and in all there are over seven hundred thousand of them—so many that if our Lord had lived upon earth until today and had gone through one village a day in India, He would not yet have visited them all. So I guess no one ought



"Built of mud and tiled roof"

to wonder that our missionaries haven't visited all the villages in their field, for it contains over eight thousand four hundred square miles and contains over one million people. Within a radius of eight miles from Dhamtari there are over one hundred villages. Every one lives in a village.

But I started to tell you about Balodgahan. The outside walls of the houses are decorated with stripes and borders of red and white, usually the main color is a sort of buff. These colors are made from colored mud found near. Very often the walls are covered with cakes of cow manure placed there to dry and later to be used for fuel.

There is an open space between the village and the near bungalow with a large pipal tree which is considered sacred, and underneath this is a stone and a worshipping place. Not far away is the large pond or tank for irrigation, washing clothes and watering cattle; some castes use this water for drinking and cooking also. Farther away is another tank used for irrigating, and there is a well at each of the Mission bungalows from the nearest of which some of the castes carry their water. The children run about without much, if any, clothing, and some of the men wear so little clothing that they'd be arrested in an American village. The women wear just a little but I don't suppose they'd be arrested for I've seen women with clothes almost as scanty and not any more decent in our own village at home.

At the edge of the village is the little Christian Church. There is a blacksmith shop or perhaps I should say a blacksmith, for his shop is the big out-of-doors. But there's no post office and no store. The missionary sends a man called a chaprasi to Dhamtari every day to carry the mail (all missionaries have such a servant whose work is to go on errands and carry messages and notes). I don't know how the villagers have their mail brought, but I guess they don't have any mail. The market place or bazaar where the people buy all they require is about a mile away and it is open only one day in the week. The rest of the time it is just a big empty field. I want to go to the bazaar some day. On one side of Balodgahan is a big jungle and on the other three sides are green rice fields. The Mission farms about one hundred and thirty acres.

India is not America and you just can't comprehend how entirely different it is. I'm sure I can't even tell you how different everything is on the very outside surface only, and the deeper you go the more different it is. You can't compare an Indian village with a pretty American country town. Here's wishing I were in the pretty one.

As ever,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XII.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, July 29.

DEAREST COUSIN:—

Did I tell you James and I are not going to school this year? Well the schools begin about the middle of March and since the hot season is over and we are all very well we are not going to the hills at all until next year. Father thought a year's vacation would not hurt us and we would have missed four months of this school year anyhow. I think I'm glad, I'm not just sure, anyhow I can learn as much right here as I could in school at home though the subjects are not the same.

There are only three missionary children here, the rest are all nearly a thousand miles away and will not see their parents until the middle of December. The schools have vacation during the cool season when the children can best be on the plains. It's nice they can be home for Christmas, isn't it? I'm so anxious to see them I can hardly wait, but I've seen a picture of them all and imagine I know them.

This is the rainy season. It's raining lots of the time and we must stay indoors but that isn't the worst. It's hot yet and damp and stifling and I feel all the time as if I were steamed. And prick-

ly heat! Most of the time I'm uncomfortable and miserable with the nettly, prickly, stinging, irritating, tantalizing affliction, and when I tell anybody about it they just say, "Oh, that's nothing! I have it too." But I can tell you it is something and something aggravating too.

And I'm never again going to wonder why mis-



Children of Missionaries

sionaries have people to fan them. A long pole is hung by ropes from the ceiling of each room. To this pole a double ruffle of Japanese-like matting is fastened. Then a rope is tied to the center of the pole and extends through a hole in the wall out on to the veranda where someone sits and pulls,

swinging the big fan or punkah back and forth across the room. They are such disagreeable and annoying and unattractive things that if they were not absolutely necessary to work and health I am sure no one would have them in their houses. They blow papers all about and tumble your hair when you want it tidy and disarrange things in general, but if you write about fifteen minutes in a room without a punkah you feel like running as fast as you can to get under one.

And often at night the air is so close and heavy and suffocating and not a leaf is moving and if you want to do anything the next day you must get sleep so you have somebody to pull the punkah over you at night too. And since we are here so many men and women come asking for work that if we had all the money we wanted I believe Father would fix up dummy punkahs of some kind just to give these poor people work when they want to earn an honest living. Then if there is a breath of air stirring all the beds are carried out on the veranda in the evening. The other night Mother had our beds carried outside in the compound and about midnight a rain came up and everybody jumped and the chaukidar helped to carry the beds in. But that's nothing either, they say. Every bungalow has a chaukidar or night-watchman whose work is to walk up and down the compound and around the bungalow the whole night through,

so that no thieves or wild animals will come near.
I have an animal story to tell you next time.

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XIII.

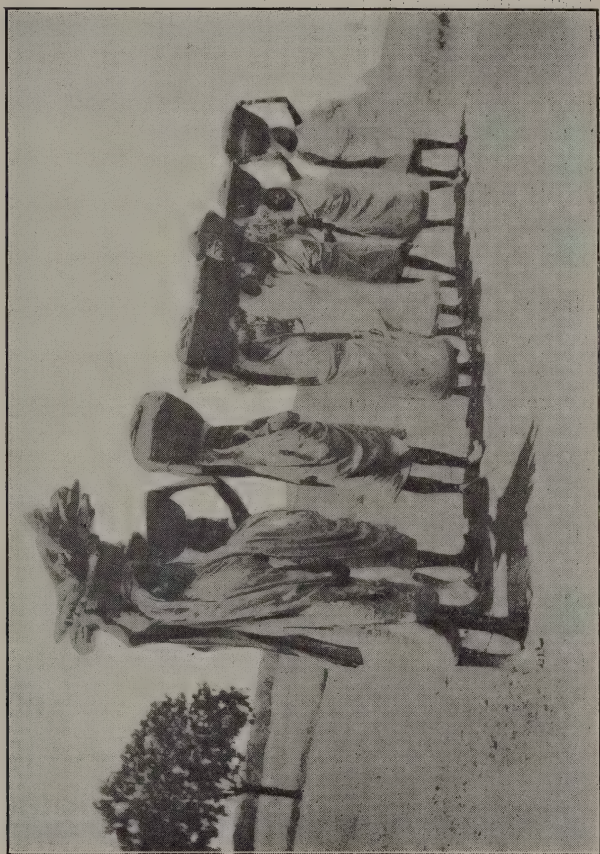
Balodgahan, C. P., India, August 5.

MY DEAR ANNA:—

The American mail reached us yesterday and such beautiful letters I got. You ask about reading. Yes, I read everything I can get. But when they send out that Christmas box from home please have them put in a lot of new books and I wish somebody would send us some good magazines. Here at this bungalow we don't get anything but our Church papers and an Indian religious weekly and I read them over until the next ones come but I do want something else.

And do send some things for all the missionaries—dolls and hair ribbons for the children, sweater coats, dresses, bedroom slippers, stockings, prayer head coverings, and some pretty things. You know they are just like other people and enjoy nice things too and they can't buy such things here. And do have them send the box early enough to reach here for Christmas. I'll sit on it all night if necessary to keep it from being opened before time.

The other evening I met some village women coming home from the weekly bazaar and I asked by signs if they would let me take their pictures.



"They stood in a row and primed and smiled"

And then they stood in a row and primped and smiled while I snapped the kodak. You can see their dress is not at all a complex affair—just a straight piece of cloth from five to eight yards long wrapped about the body with one end thrown over the head. There is not a pin nor a button nor a string. Wouldn't it be handy? The women sometimes carry very heavy baskets on their heads and don't seem to mind it in the least.

I have a new pet. It's an active lizard that runs over our walls and even across the ceiling like a fly. Its home, its house, its nest, is behind the big picture hanging over our table and it is interesting to watch it come out at night and feed on the many insects that always gather on the wall near the lamp. It is about six inches long, grayish white in color and darts very quickly for its prey. This one is by no means the only lizard in the bungalow but since they were all here before us they seem to think the place is theirs and if we want to accommodate ourselves to them and their surroundings, all right, we can live here too. The little reptiles make one think of alligators and crocodiles with their long body and tail and two pairs of limbs; and I didn't like them one bit at first. But they do not bite and they have no poison glands and since they destroy a lot of insects that do bite I decided I'd better try to learn to like them and now we find them very interesting. Last week

Lizy (that's my pet's name) lost her tail somehow. I don't know what happened, perhaps she had a fight about the best place in the room or perhaps she had a fright at hearing me speak Hindi, but one evening when she came out for her supper her long tail was missing. I've heard of some animals reproducing lost parts of the body, now I'm going to watch and when Lizy re-tails herself I'll let you know.

This language is so twisty, but I'm going to learn it even tho it twists my tongue a lot, pronouncing these strange and meaningless words.

Salaam,

MARY.

P. S. Salaam means to salute or to say goodbye or to send one's compliments.

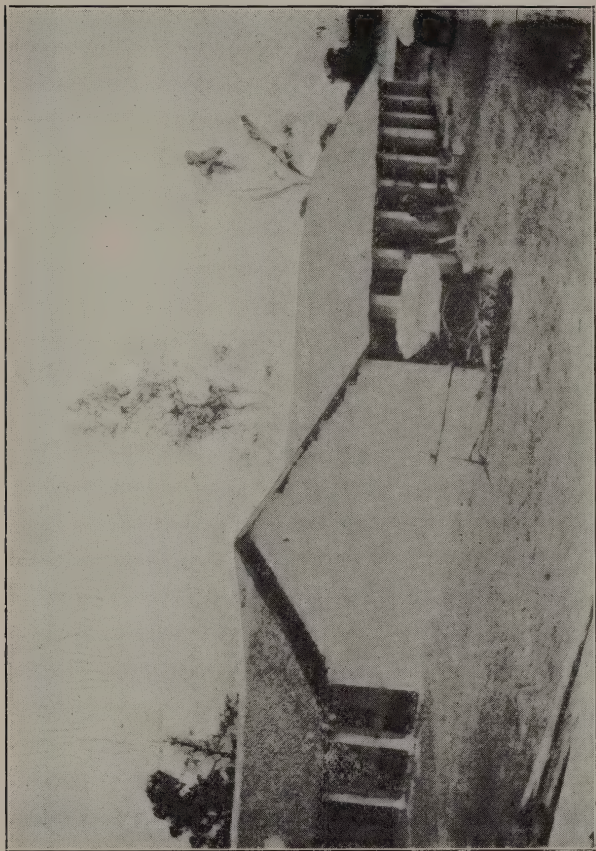
LETTER NO. XIV.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, August 12.

DEAR ANNA:—

That last letter of yours was a pack of questions sure enough! I'm going to try to answer them all so my letter will look like a table of statistics I guess. But some of the things you ask I knew by heart before I ever started to India and I thought every Mennonite school child knew them. And don't you know you could find out most of those things from the annual reports of the mission? Mother thinks the Publishing House sends a nice little booklet containing the annual reports to any one who asks for one. And then often there is something about the work in the Gospel Herald, Christian Monitor, and Youth's Christian Companion. Don't you see them? You must remember that twenty years ago there was no Dhamtari Mission and no Christian work nearer than forty miles to the northwest and we should have had to travel on south one hundred and thirty-five miles farther, —often a six day's journey by ox-cart—to the nearest Christian mission station.

Now there are thirteen missionaries, five married couples and three single sisters located at Dhamtari, Balodgahan seven miles away, and San-



The Workshop

kra eighteen miles away. Two missionary children are members of the Church so there are fifteen American Mennonites and over six hundred Indian Mennonites here in India. (This does not include our own family.) There are over three hundred children of Indian Christians and I think all of them over twelve years of age have been baptized and some even younger are members of the Church. Over one hundred of the Christians are lepers. About one hundred and fifty lepers are supported in the Leper Asylum.

Boys can obtain an English High School education while girls can take work up to the end of the Fourth Standard in our schools. The regular Government Course of study is followed in all the schools. Besides the regular studies the pupils are taught Christian songs and the Bible. There are about a dozen mud school houses in villages besides the large brick High School building and boys' dormitory in Dhamtari. There is a boys' orphanage at Dhamtari, and a girls' orphanage at Balodgahan. There are three hospitals, four church buildings, six missionary bungalows, and a workshop. There is a new widows' home here in this village. These I believe are the main buildings of the Mission, but they are putting up some more and will begin still others just as soon as possible. I want you to know that the work over here is not a little thing

and I believe it is larger than most people at home realize.

The value of all the real estate, buildings, etc., is \$60,000, only about one sixth as much as the value of the real estate, buildings, furnishings, etc., of our Mission stations and charitable institutions in America.

There are about sixty Indian workers, that is, Colporters and Bible women, and five ordained Indian deacons. I tried to find out, "How many villages have been reached with active work and how many have not received the Gospel?" It is hard to know but I did learn this: Over four hundred villages were toured last year and over three hundred villages have been visited regularly during the year by Bible women or Colporters. There were about thirty village Sunday schools; and Christian workers live in about a dozen different villages. I don't know how many villages are in our territory. Dhamtari has about twelve thousand people and there are sixteen villages of some size, so remembering there are over a million people in the territory there must be at least twice as many villages not reached as were reached last year and in some of the villages toured last year there was not one person that had ever heard that there was a Jesus. It's terrible to think about these people who can't be reached!

One does not have to be here very long to see

that one of the greatest needs of the field is more missionaries and that one of the greatest problems is to get them. Some of those here are doing the work of two persons without the physical strength of one. I don't see how they can do so much! I can hardly wait until I get the language well enough to help in the singing and to teach a Sunday school class and to do something else. There are so many things to do and so few to do them that I want to do all that I can just as soon as I can.

You know all this work and the Christian community here is largely a result of the awful famine of 1900 following the extensive famine of 1897. And you know last year the rains in this part of India were light and short again so that many classes of people have been affected and have been coming to the Mission for help. I could be writing you stories and stories every week of famine but you can read enough of those in the papers. They're all too true! What if they were our own people who were starving? I wonder if we would do any more than we are doing.

In most of India the rainfall depends upon the monsoons or summer winds from the Indian Ocean. So important are these winds to the life of the people that the bursting of the monsoons, usually between the first and middle of June, is the theme of many an Indian poet's writings. But if the monsoons fail? Then there is drought and famine. In

the last fifty years twenty-two famines have killed more than twenty-eight million people. That one of 1900 affected 52,000,000 and killed over 1,000,000. This lack of rain is being provided against by the British Government in constructing thousands of miles of irrigating canals. But the poverty of the people of India in normal times adds to the terrible effects of drought. It has been estimated that the average income of a family in India is three cents a day and excluding the wealthy few the average income for a family is one and three-fourths cents per day. Forty million go through life with too little food, lying down hungry every night upon a mud floor, having eaten only one meal during the day. Some of the causes of this poverty are the dependence of the people upon agriculture with very poor methods of agriculture, the lack of manufactures, and the crowded population. India has one-fifth of the total population of the world, one hundred and seventy-five people to the square mile while the United States has twenty-eight per square mile.

Now Anna, don't think these statistics will be correct very long! The Christian Church is being enlarged nearly every week, last Sunday again more than twenty persons were baptized. We are reaping from the good seed sown during the last twenty years and will continue to reap an increasing amount, so that in a couple of years the Christian

community may be nearly double what it is now, and if there are not over twenty American missionaries,—well there's something very, very, serious the matter with you people at home.

Lovingly,

MARY.

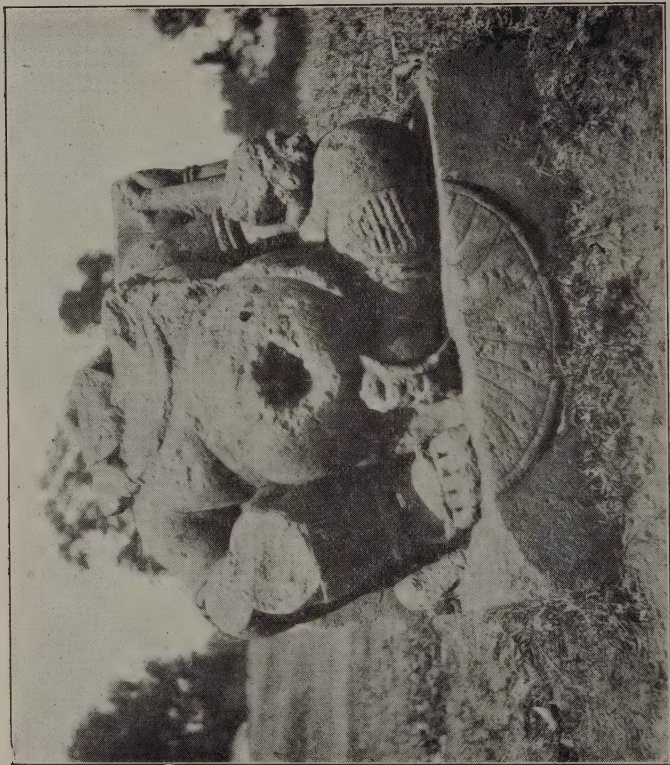
LETTER NO. XV.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, August 19.

MY DEAR COUSIN:—

For over a week it's just been raining, raining, raining, without any rest. And it isn't raining daffodils or violets or roses or wild flowers or clover blossoms either. I've watched it for hours at a time and I was out in it once long enough to go to prayer meeting at the other bungalow, and I know. I don't care what James Whitcomb Riley says, it's raining *rain*. I guess he never was in India.

And my nice shoes are all covered with mildew because we didn't know enough to keep them in a tin lined box, and our books are all mildewed, and it's damp and musty everywhere. I didn't get one letter this week and there's no one here my age except the orphan girls and I can't talk with them yet. I'm longing with all my might to be at home and I can hardly keep the tears back far enough to write. It wasn't so bad at first, but just between you and me, I'm homesick. I want to be at home right now for I'm lonesome for the girls and everybody and everything. What seemed picturesque here has all worn off already and it isn't at all pleasant. But I'm not letting anybody here know it, they don't see any tears, for whatever happens I'm



"It is a horrible looking thing"

not going to worry Mother with my homesickness when she may be feeling even worse. But I can tell you it takes a lot of grit to look pleasantly all the time.

Just think, Anna! There are 330,000,000 gods in India but none of them have any uplifting power over the people, and they are worshiped as a sort of defense against danger or as a tool to gain a livelihood. There are shrines and idols and stones and sacred trees and worshiping places to be seen scattered all about this village and farm, I have no idea how many.

But worship is conducted on an altogether different plan from that in Christian lands. The worshiping places are not used for the same purpose as our churches and the people do not go to pray and praise and sing with others. No congregation ever gathers to listen to a sermon on religion or even an address on morals. When the Hindu goes to worship he goes to the temple, looks at the idol, prostrates himself before it, repeats its name, presents an offering which the priest gets, and goes home to be as sinful as before. And I have seen men worship simply by placing some fresh marigolds on a raised spot sacred to one of their gods.

The real worship is all performed by the priests who must be Brahmans and they treat the images as tho they were living beings, waking them with bells in the morning, putting them to sleep in the

evening, etc. Think of worshipping a god that must have his attention called by ringing a bell when you go to worship him.

There are many idols and temples falling into ruin about here because no one wants to repair them but since merit is obtained by erecting a new shrine many new ones are springing up all the time.

The broken idol (the picture of which I am sending you) is near Dhamtari. Larger than a man, made of stone, it is a horrible looking thing even without the head. The idols are all ugly, and there are so many, many of them. I wonder if the people will ever learn to worship the God of love, the God who is a Spirit and who must be worshiped in spirit and in truth, the God who wants obedience rather than sacrifice.

Lovingly yours,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XVI

Balodgahan, C. P., India, August 26.

MY DEAR ANNA:—

We've had something exciting since I wrote last. One evening we were all sitting in our rooms, I was alone in one and Father, Mother, and James were reading in the other. Suddenly I saw a long snake coiled on the box almost touching my seat. I didn't know if it was ready to strike or not but its head was raised and I heard that if a snake were ready to strike a person, and he moved one inch he would surely be bitten but if he kept absolutely motionless he would be safe. So I called, "Father, here's a snake!" He rushed to get the revolver but only injured it the first time he shot and it didn't stay on the box. I managed to close the door and somehow get past the snake into the other room and then Father battled in earnest. The snake circled about and then he finally killed it as it was trying to crawl up the corner of the room. There are still shot marks on the wall about a yard high. I was not frightened until I saw the thing dead and then I felt as if I were about ready to collapse. Afterwards we found that it was four feet long and that it was a *karait*, considered quite poisonous. Its bite is said to kill a person in twenty-eight minutes. It



Cobras

was a dangerous experience and I know God was watching over us or I surely would have been bitten.

We must always keep a light burning in our bedrooms at night and we always carry a light with us after dark because of snakes, but this is the special season for them. The rains drive them out of their hot weather hiding places and they sometimes come into the bungalows looking for another place. Lizards in the house are enough! But snakes! Doesn't it make the cold chills creep up your back just to think of it? Then how do you suppose it feels to endure them?

The other week I saw a huge cobra just inside the door-sill and though I called right away and kept watching it, when Father arrived we had to hunt and hunt before we found it behind the door under the edge of the matting. The bite of the cobra is so poisonous that death has followed within a few minutes in many cases and unless prompt measures are taken a few hours is the longest time a person can expect to live after being bitten by one. Thousands of natives of India lose their lives every year through cobra bites and the bites of other poisonous snakes, but they say no missionary has ever been fatally bitten. The cobra is sometimes six feet in length and when disturbed or angry, it raises its head and about one third of its

body, swells out its neck into a wide hood, and seems to stand erect.

The other morning one of the missionaries at another station was in the bathroom. A servant came from the outside to bring him some hot water, but without saying a word pulled him out of the door and then pointed to a cobra that was just at his feet. The missionary killed it with a heavy stick that is kept handy in every bungalow.

And just last evening the missionary here was called to a nearby village to treat a woman who had been bitten in her house by a cobra. The snake fell down from the grass roof, and of course no Hindu would kill even a poisonous snake lest it might enclose the soul of some person who in previous life had been a sage or a saint or an ancestor. But this woman's husband and brother came here immediately and James went along with them and the missionary in a country cart. James said when they arrived at the village there was a witch doctor at the house trying to stuff some medicine of some kind into the woman's mouth and it looked as if she was almost dead. The witch doctor was sent away and then the wound was cauterized with some permanganate of potash and this morning the men have come back and say the woman is all right. James says he could take care of me now if I should get a snake bite but I prefer not to let him have the chance.

But if I don't stop telling snake stories you'll not be able to sleep after you read this. Well, we sleep--that is, if nothing else keeps us awake.

Ever your loving cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XVII.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, September 2.

MY DEAR ANNA:—

You ask about caste: a caste is one of the classes of Hindu society,—a collection of families holding a common name, claiming descent from a common ancestor, following the same calling, unified by the same fixed rules and customs, and separated from every other caste by the prohibitions of intermarriage, eating together, contact, etc. Yes, get ready! I'm going to give you a regular dissertation on caste.

Originally there were four castes and the commonly believed story of their creation is that they issued from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet of Brahma, the creator. According to this story, where do you suppose you would belong? To the *Brahman* who sprang from the mouth was assigned the duties of reading and teaching, and of sacrificing; to defend the people and give alms were the duties of the *Kshatriya* who sprang from the arms; to keep herds of cattle and carry on trade were the duties of the *Vaishya* who sprang from the thighs; and to serve the other three classes was the duty assigned to the *Sudra* coming from the feet. The first three classes were present at the great sacrifices while the



One of the Sudra Caste

fourth or servile class were not allowed to be present at the sacrifices or feasts.

Now, instead of four castes, each of these has

divided and subdivided until there are over two thousand, three hundred principal castes and tribes. And if all the lower castes were included there



Low Caste Water Carrier

would probably be one hundred thousand castes in India, no two of which can intermarry. The *Brahmans* form only about one-fifth of the population

of the country. *The Sudras* are by far the most numerous and form the respectable middle class to-day, numbering nearly half of the total population. Then there is a fifth order or out-caste called "*untouchables*" who have always been considered so low and degraded and unclean that they are altogether refused the title Hindu, are forced to live outside the villages, and are not permitted to enter the Hindu temples. No one at home can understand how these people live. The missionary here says that once in passing one of their villages he saw some buzzards, some scavenger dogs, and some people dividing the carcass of a cow that had most probably died of disease, or rather, they were all trying to get the biggest meal of meat.

Caste is the one great problem in India, they say, and the one thing that makes mission work so difficult. Hundreds right around here would become Christians if they could keep their caste. But caste holds back the high-caste students in the English School and caste holds back the low-caste people in the villages and caste meets the missionary everywhere he goes. If caste goes, Hinduism must go. In order to be a Hindu a man must have been born into one of its castes. According to all Hindu books and all Hindu customs it is absolutely impossible for an American or a European to become a Hindu, and so you see where you come in at.

You're an out-caste! And maybe you can imagine a little how we are considered by the Hindus.

Of our Christians, less than a half dozen come from the high castes, perhaps about half come from



A High Caste Hindu Family

the out-castes, and the others come from the various respectable castes. It's a worse mixture than wealthy, influential people at home attending church with the slum people, and I guess the wealthy churches in America might well learn a lesson or two from the Indian Christians. And I guess the Gospel that can take a little out-caste boy and uplift him to be a son of God, a leader of men, and an honest citizen, is a Gospel no one can afford to be ashamed of. Anyhow I'll never be ashamed of it, will you?

As ever,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XVIII.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, September 9.

DEAR COUSIN:—

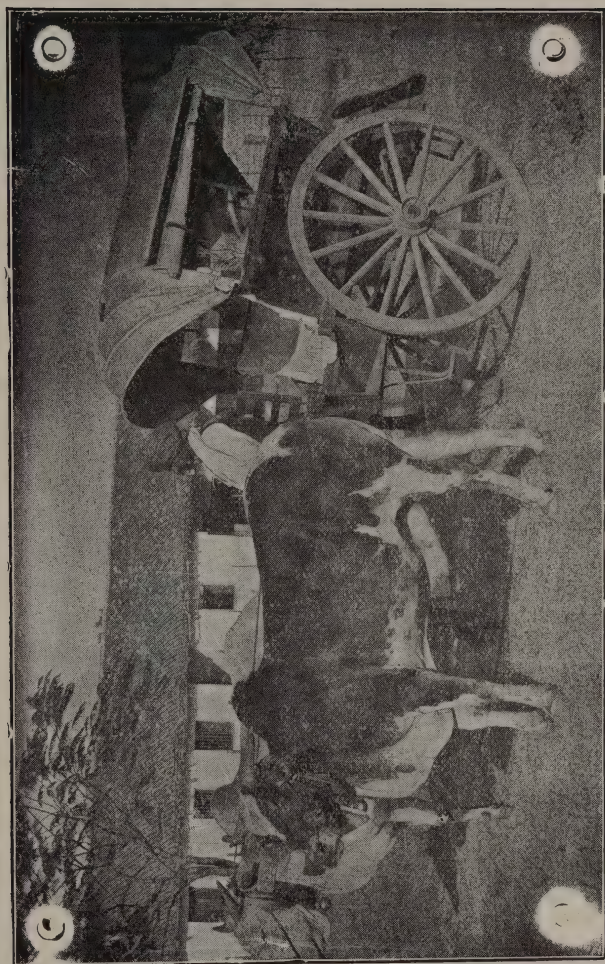
This morning I went with one of the missionary ladies and one of the older orphanage girls to Dhamtari to do some shopping. We left here early in the morning in the *tonga* and the oxen traveled much faster than I thought they could, going the seven miles in an hour and a half. We went past nice rice fields and I counted about a dozen villages in sight of the road; then thru one of the Christian sections of Dhamtari, past the Church house, and the Sundarganj Mission Compound; and then thru one of the main streets of Dhamtari, into the business part of town—a long street lined with little shops on either side. The shops, as the stores are called here, are mere stalls with whole fronts opening directly on the street. There are no doors or windows at the sides for the stalls are separated from each other by board walls only. A door at the back opens into the rooms of the shop-keeper's family. We stopped before a stall where cotton goods of all colors and shades and of various kinds was stacked on shelves all around three sides. I waited on the *tonga* where I could see some of the other shops.



Sweet Meat Seller

The shop that caught my eye was a brass shop with rows and rows of lovely, rich looking, brass waterpots of various sizes, and rows of shining brass plates and artistically shaped brass drinking cups. The shop-keeper sat on the floor in the back part of the shop smoking his *hookah*, or long, curved pipe. Next to this was a shop with toe-rings and finger-rings and ear-rings and anklets and armlets and wristlets and necklaces of bright brass and silver. On the opposite side of the street was a little stall with heaps of pretty glass bangles or bracelets of scarlet, crimson, gold, purple, green, orange, yellow, brown, and black. The largest of them looked just about big enough for a tiny girl but all the women wear them. Beyond was a shop with rows of large baskets heaped up with salt and grain—rice, wheat, several shades of dal or split peas, and *chunna*, a sort of pea that is roasted and eaten as we eat pop-corn. Then there was a man right out on the street with several kinds of sweetmeat (candy) spread out on a low square table. And it did look so dirty.

The merchants' goods are all exposed to view right from the street and they usually sit on the floor to sell them while the customer stands outside on the street or sits on the floor to examine and bargain. Goods are often sold in very small quantities and are paid for in *pice*, a copper coin worth about half a cent.



"We left.....on the tonga"

And I should think the people would get tired shopping, it seems impossible for them to hurry. A sale is made somewhat as follows: The merchant gives an asking price which is "cheap, very cheap." The customer says he will not come to the shop again unless the right price is said, and the merchant names just half of what he asked. Then the customer says he will give two-thirds of that price and the merchant shakes his head angrily, says he is a poor man with many children whose stomachs are empty and he will not be robbed, and begins to put up his goods, while the customer starts off. And then the merchant calls him back, smiling, tells him to take the goods at his own price and wishes him good morning. I think it would be impossible for me to bargain, I would be thoroly "beat." And no wonder it took the missionary so long in the shops. She bought yards of red cloth to make dresses for the little orphanage girls, some blue cloth for jackets (waists) for older girls, a number of *saris* (*sari* is the name of the long straight garment that all Indian women wear), a lot of soap, a lantern, a bucket, and some fresh fruit.

Main street is so narrow that I thought our wheel would be taken off when we met several heavy carts, but our *tonga wala* (driver) steered us thru all right without running over a single baby. There are no sidewalks. The streets are not named and houses are located by caste. The people of one

caste all live near together and form a sort of section somewhat separate from the rest.

There are some wealthy men in Dhamtari—so wealthy they don't know how much silver coin is stored away under their houses and it would take carts and carts and carts to move it. Their houses are larger, some of them being two stories high. I saw the front of one large house occupied by a family of fifty people. But the majority of the houses are the same size and style as those of Balodgahan I told you about.

We stopped at Sundarganj for breakfast and then started home getting here in time for tiffin. It made me tired riding in that ox tonga. So for this time,

Goodbye,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XIX.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, September 16.

My DEAR OLD COUSIN:—

Determined as I was to try going without a sun hat I'm satisfied now to live in India all the rest of my days, if I must live here, without any experimenting along that line. I know now "there's a reason" why the missionaries are always so careful to carry an umbrella and wear a topi even when the sun does not feel warm, and I'm satisfied that the Indian climate and sun are not like the climate and sun to which we're accustomed. I don't know how it can hurt us but I know it does and that's enough for me.

The other morning James and I were developing and printing some kodak pictures and I've found out that there are two reasons why you at home do not see more pictures from India and from the missionaries—money and time. (I've heard several say they've wanted to send some pictures of their houses, etc., to friends at home but they can't afford it and they don't have time.) Well we were working in an east room and often walked back and forth in front of an open door. I did not feel hot at all but it wasn't long before my head felt all confused and I had a queer, faint, giddy, and alto-



Shop Under a Babul Tree

gether unexplainable feeling, so that I could hardly walk. At breakfast time James said he felt the same way. I was in bed the rest of the day with a very sharp headache and when we sent for the Doctor she said, "Too much sun!" I told her I didn't see how the sun could hurt me when I wasn't out in it and I wasn't too hot and she said, "I don't know *how* but *somehow* it almost gave you sunstroke." I still have a dull headache and I'll wear my topi hereafter for I know if the sun shines on my head at all it can hurt me.

The last picture we got is that of a little shop under a *babul tree* which we pass on our way to Dhamtari. Two pieces of bamboo matting to protect himself and his wares from the beating rains, some fruit, a few boxes of cigarettes and matches, some pän (I'll tell you later about that for it isn't "pan" but "pä.n.")—this is all the shopkeeper needs to set up business and make enough to keep going. The tree is one of the species of *Acacia*. The road for almost the whole distance from Balodgahan to Dhamtari is lined on either side with these trees making it a really beautiful road. The trees themselves are pretty, some of them perhaps twenty-five feet high, with fine compound pinnate leaves. The wood mentioned so often in the 36th, 37th, and 38th chapters of Exodus, from which the ark, table, altar, and other parts of the tabernacle were made, was probably a similar species of the *Acacia*, Father

says, the timber being valuable for its strength and durability. I'll bring along home some of the dry pod-like fruit for you.

I wish I were a regular botanist, there are so many new and interesting trees I'd like to learn all about. Father got us two books on Indian trees and James and I are each trying to identify the most, getting some leaves and a sample of the wood of each. Won't I be learned when I get home if I learn all there is to learn here?

Yours,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XX.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, September 23.

DEAR ANNA:—

The first thing of special interest this week was a wedding, a double wedding. The brides were girls who were in the orphanage so I was doubly interested. Some time ago the missionary in charge of the boys' orphanage and who does all the arranging for the boys, said two boys desired two of the girls in marriage. So the missionary lady in charge consulted the girls. They thought it satisfactory and said "Yes." Then the boys were told and were given the privilege to call on their brides elect. I was all curious to see one of these meetings, for young people never meet in private before their wedding, but they both took place in the presence of the missionary and the office doors were closed. Anyhow in both cases a happy looking girl left the room by the east door and a happier looking boy by the north door, and immediately plans for the wedding were begun.

It was a simple church wedding and afterwards I signed my name as one of the witnesses. The brides' outer garments were of fine, soft, white, cloth with gold-colored border. They had made their other clothing all themselves by hand, and

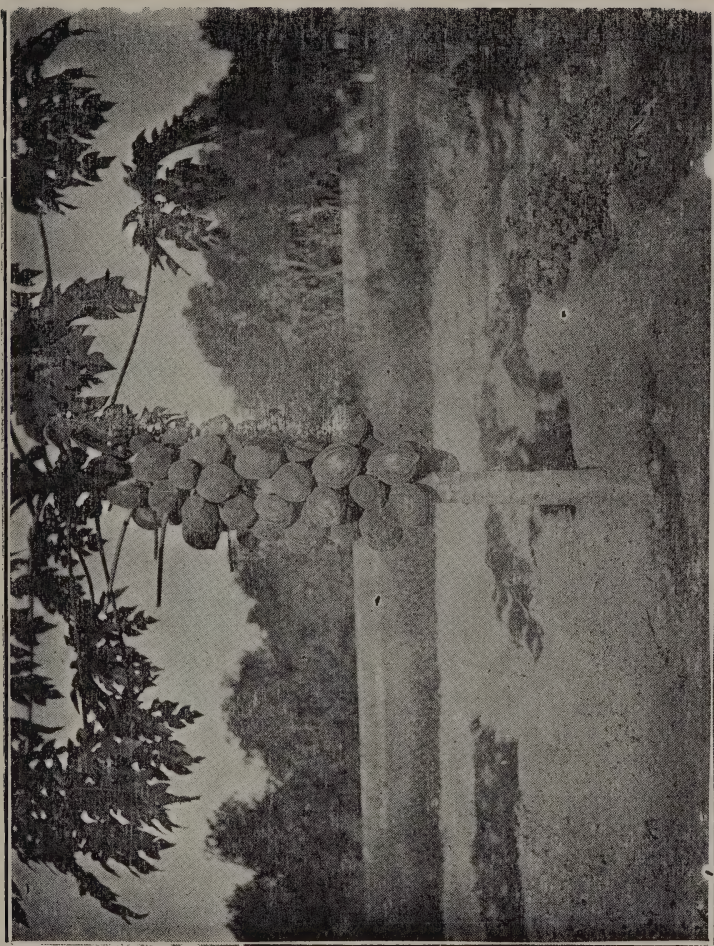


Fruit Sellers

there was some beautifully crocheted lace around the bottom of the skirts. After the ceremony they went to their new homes in Dhamtari, where I believe they'll "live happy ever after" even tho they are only mud-walled huts. Anyhow I know the house doesn't have anything to do with the happiness of its inmates.

The girls were each given a trunk-like box in which to keep their clothing; a shallow brass dish, a brass plate and drinking cup; a round iron pan and iron spoon; an earthen waterpot and cooking vessel; a broom; a basket like those you see in the picture I sent you of the village women; a blanket; a supa, shaped like a dust pan and made of bamboo splints, with which to clean rice; a bottle in which to put oil; a piece of soap; a spool of thread; some buttons and some needles. How would you like to start up housekeeping without tables, chairs, knives, forks, spoons, and all the other things we think are absolutely necessary? It wouldn't be very comfortable to say the least. But these articles given are enough to start up housekeeping comfortably here; other things are not necessary and would be luxuries.

The *papaiya*, I've found out is one of the finest fruits after you get used to it. The tree grows very quickly and the missionaries have many of them. The fruit has a thin, greenish yellow rind; many small seeds in the center; a soft, yellow,



"The fruit grows directly on the tree"

sweetish pulp; and the fruit as well as the leaves grow directly on the trunk of the tree which has no branches. It is not so unlike a large muskmelon in taste and appearance and as many as two hundred grow on one tree. They do not all ripen at once but there are ripe fruit, green fruit, and blooms on the tree at the same time.

But the mango is the finest fruit of all. There are many varieties which differ from one another as much as apples. The poorer varieties have a flavor like turpentine but the best are sweet, slightly acid and a real prize. The green fruit is made into pickle and sauces and the ripe fruit is made into jam but it is the best just as it comes from the tree. The tree itself grows to a height of forty feet and has very wide spreading branches with dense foliage, the leaves being from six to eight inches long. The fruit is kidney shaped and varies in size with different varieties, some growing six inches in length. We get some whenever anyone goes to Dhamtari for there the fruit sellers bring them to the bungalows every day. The following verses express my feelings about the Indian mango:

“Talk of luscious, red strawberries,
Peaches ripe and dressed with cream,
Even huckleberries purple—
But the *mango* is a dream.

“In itself it has the sugar,
In itself it has the cream;

Peaches, pears, and watermelons—
But the mango is a dream.

“In your saucer put your berries,
Add your sugar and your cream;
But its cheek is its own saucer—
Oh, the mango *is* a dream.

“Luscious, yellow, firm, and mellow,
With delight you almost scream—
For of all the fruits that earth has,
Sure the mango is the dream.”

Anna, you must plan to come to India and
you'll say too, “Them's my sentiments.”

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXI.

Calcutta, India, September 30.

MY OWN DEAR COUSIN ANNA:—

Aren't you surprised to hear from me in Calcutta? Well, I'm just as surprised at being here. I was so unfortunate as to get a bad tooth. Our doctor said I had to come here to a dentist to have it treated, and Father brought me yesterday. We went to the dentist in the afternoon who fixed it up somehow so that the pain stopped; and it is so good to see civilized people and homes again that I'm all excited over it and feel it was almost worth a week of jumping toothache. But just think of traveling five hundred miles to see the dentist! We shall probably go back on Monday and since we're here anyhow, I am quite satisfied to stay a few days.

If you only knew how it feels just to see the nice clothing and dishes, the stacks of good eatables, the expensive pianos and victrolas, the beautiful pictures, etc., in the large English shops! If you want to know how it feels just you try living away from all of them for three whole months and you'll think it's almost fortunate to get a toothache. But you can't even try it at home. And one of our missionary women has just had a vacation from her work—the first she was away for nearly two years.

How would you like to have this Hindu *derzi* or tailor make your clothing? We saw scores like



A Parsi

him in tiny stalls in the native bazaar. I wouldn't mind having the soft silk *sari* of terra cotta with gold embroidery and border, at his left.

In another stall we saw some men cleaning cotton and making it light and fluffy with a rude machine of some sort.

Calcutta surely has a mixture of people. Even I am beginning to see a great difference in the people who all looked alike at first. Even with all our immigrants in the United States we are **one** people much more nearly than India is. We are seeing lots of Parsis or fire worshipers. You remember it sounded so interesting when we read all about them in "Stories from India." They are very successful merchants and are highly educated. Benevolence is the chief precept of their religion and they have many charitable institutions all of which are for Parsis however.

Then we saw *Maharattis* too, people of western India numbering about fifteen million. They are of mixed blood, speak the Maharathi language and are followers of Hinduism, but they are not at all like the people around Balodgahan. Father says there are a few *Maharattis* in Dhamtari.

Today we did some shopping for Mother and the other missionaries. I did most of the selecting and Father did all of the bargaining, and it's even more of a tiresome proceeding than it is in Dhamtari. Missionaries buy, whenever possible, from



A Maharatti

the native shops rather than from the larger European houses because it is cheaper. Many of the shop keepers have a good use of the English language, but at the rate we made purchases today we shall never get done in two more days, for we spent most of the time in getting the chinaware for mother that we will need later on. I shouldn't call it chinaware however for it isn't china at all,—a plain, white serviceable set of dishes that answer the purpose better for missionary folk.

Father is ready to take a drive to the zoo so I'll have to wait until next week to tell you more of Calcutta.

Lovingly your Cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXII.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, October 7.

MY DEAREST ANNA:—

We got back from Calcutta on Monday with two steamer trunks and a dozen baskets and boxes full of things we had bought for everybody, and it really seemed like coming home, and I was glad to get here again.

I'm beginning to remember that "Somewhere the sun is shining." We've actually had two whole weeks without a single downpour of rain and the sunshine looks like home too. This part of the old earth certainly had a soaking! And now that the mildew and mold don't make everything look and smell ages old, and since the rice crop depends on the rains, it's easier to say,

"It ain't no use to grumble and complain!

When God sorts out the weather and sends rain

Why rain's my choice."

Men surely are degraded creatures with a religion which does not have Christ! I never so realized it before we saw a fakir (fä-keer') in Calcutta whose body and face and clothing were covered with dust and filth, who looked anything but peaceful and saintly, but who believed himself very pious

and devout and who expects a great reward for his devotion.

Great numbers of such men in India spend their



**“Some besmear their long hair
with cowdung”**

lives in going about from village to village and from shrine to shrine, visiting the great pilgrim

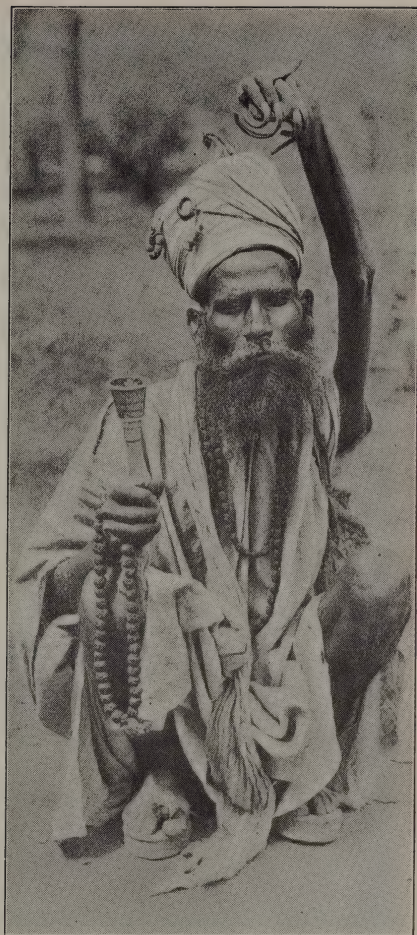
centers, trying to find forgiveness and relief. Filth and uncleanness are characteristics of these holy men of every description. Some lie on beds of spikes never leaving them for as long as fifteen years. Some have held up their arms for twelve years until they have become stiff and immovable, and the untrimmed finger nails have grown several inches in length piercing thru the flesh or winding about the shriveled and distorted hand. Some besmear their long hair with cowdung, others smear the body with ashes, and still others wear a long string of large beads about the neck. Because of their penances and self torture these men gain the reverence of the lower classes of people who think it an act of great merit to feed them or to help them in any way. There are over five million of these holy men, fakirs, sadhus, and religious beggars—over a million more than there are Christians in the country. A large proportion of them are ignorant, perhaps three fourths are coarse and indecent and lazy, many are immoral, and Hindus themselves acknowledge that most of them are not sincere. But there are many who have learning and real character like Sundar Singh and Chundra Lela. I know you and Aunt Martha and the others too would enjoy reading the biography of these two Christian pilgrims, they are more interesting than a fairy tale or novel or love story, I can tell you.

I have just finished, "An Indian Priestess, the Life of Chundra Lela."

Chundra Lela was a fakir woman who determined by three years of self torture to rid herself of sin. She would sit all day in the burning sun during the six hottest months of the year with four fires built about her, the sun making the fifth, and at night during the cold season she would sit in a pond with water up to her neck counting her beads and crying, "Ram! Ram! Ram!" She said, "Nobody knows how long those nights were, nor how I suffered before morning. In a night I would go round the string one thousand times, repeating the name of the gods 108,000 times. All this I endured just to find God." (Ram is the name of one of the most popular heroes of India, an incarnation of the god Vishnu, but to a vast number of Hindus he is not merely their hero but the only savior they know.) Chundra Lela finally left Hinduism and then went on long pilgrimages to tell other fakirs of Christ.

So in some cases these Hindu religious seekers have found the true Savior. Would it not be a great army if they could all be sent out for Him! And isn't it a cruel, horrible religion whose sacred books enjoin such bodily tortures on its followers!

You'll be having Thanksgiving and Mission Day about the time you get this. Of course you'll be going to Grandmother's for Thanksgiving, and



The finger nails have grown
several inches in length"

I'll be wishing I could go. Have a good time for me! When I get home I ought to be qualified to give a whole Mission Day program myself. Tell the girls, "The half has not been told" about India.

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXIII.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, October 14.

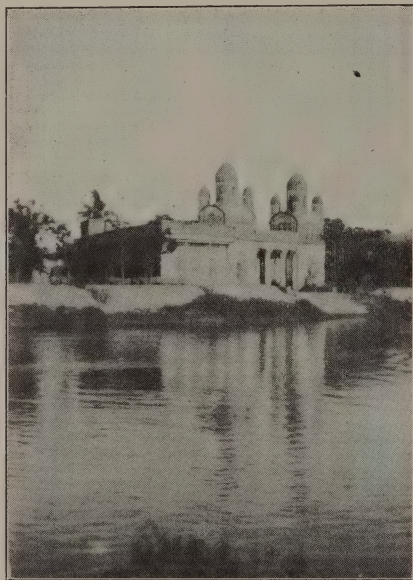
DEAR COUSIN:—

I've been finding out a little about one of the principal Hindu goddesses since we went to Calcutta, wouldn't you like to hear about her? Calcutta derives its name from Kali-ghat, the shrine of the goddess Kali close to the old course of the Ganges River, which is still venerated and is marked by many shrines and burning ghats for the dead. Father and I went out to Kali-ghat about a mile to the South of the Calcutta outskirts where we saw great numbers of temples and idols clustered together.

There is a law in India against obscene books, pictures, and images, but to prevent the prosecution of Hindu temples an exemption had to be made in the Penal Code that, "This section does not extend to any representation sculptured, engraved, printed, or otherwise represented on or in any temple or any car used for the conveyance of idols, or kept or used for any religious purpose." Doesn't that in itself testify to the indecent character of Hinduism loud enough? The figures are ugly and disgusting to say the least. The rooms in which some of the principal images are kept are so dark that even at

mid-day nothing is visible without the help of a lamp.

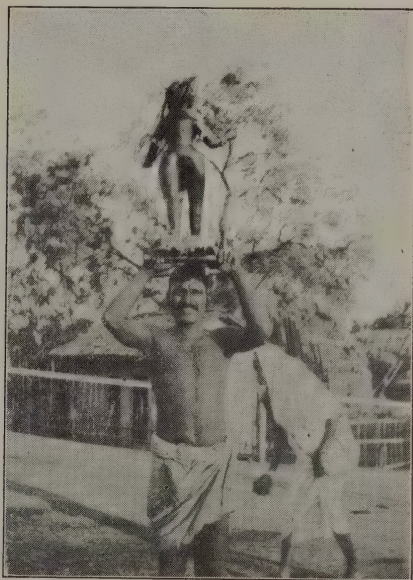
Kali, said to be the wife of the god Siva, is represented as a black or dark blue woman with



Temple at Kalighat

four arms. In one hand she has a sword, in another the head of the giant she has slain, with the other two she is encouraging her worshipers. And I should think they would need considerable encour-

aging for she is hideous and fierce looking, resembling a fury rather than a goddess. For ear-rings she has two dead bodies; she wears a necklace of skulls; her only clothing is a girdle made of dead



An Image of the Goddess Kali

men's hands and her tongue protrudes from her mouth. Her eyes are red as those of a drunkard and her breasts are besmeared with blood. She is dancing on the body of her husband with one foot

on his thigh, and the other on his breast. Can you imagine any benefit to be derived from thinking about and worshiping such an object?

Human sacrifices were formerly offered to Kali, as ordained by Hindu Scriptures though now they are forbidden both by British law and by a more recent class of Hindu books. But the pilgrims come to Kali-ghat every day in the year, especially on certain days when immense crowds assemble to offer a kid, sheep, or buffalo and the sacrifices are numbered by the hundreds. Families in any great sorrow vow to Kali that if the trouble is removed a sacrifice will be made to her.

A very well educated and intelligent looking Hindu who went with us from the street car to the ghat explained how offerings of sugar, rice, grain flowers, money, etc., are made to the idols and he seemed very much disappointed when we did not worship any of his idols or give any offering. And the priest who gets the proceeds of the sacrifices and offerings seemed just as disappointed. Father told him about the God of love but he did not seem to understand at all.

The Sunday we were in Calcutta we went to services at the Thoburn church named after the Bishop Thoburn who came to India in 1859. There was a large congregation of Americans and Indians and I think I never was so glad to hear an English sermon. It's the first real English service we've

attended for five months. Once I can understand the Hindi sermons quite well it won't be so bad. But what words I do understand get all mixed-up in my brain now before I get the meaning out of them.

There goes the bell for breakfast and here go I.

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXIV.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, October 21.

DEAREST COUSIN :—

How I'd like to give you a drink of lime juice. We can get these small round lemon-like fruits very



India Sisters Sewing

cheap in the bazaar and they make a very good beverage.

Another of your letters came today. You ask if our India sisters wear the prayer head covering

and if not why not? And you say you never see a sign of the covering in pictures or read anything about it which makes you think it is not worn. Let me ask you a question. Did you ever see the picture of one of the Christian Indian women here with her head uncovered? I am quite sure you never did, for our Indian sisters do wear the covering. Why should the women here not wear it when it is one of the ordinances of our church and why should the people here not uphold the doctrines of our Church?

Probably you expected to see the same kind of prayer head covering on the Indian women as you wear and I guess I'd better enlighten you a little along this line. You don't wear exactly the same kind of covering as the sisters do in either Pennsylvania or Kansas. Well the Indian women wear still another kind—a kind that for them is much more practical I should think. A pice is worth about a half cent and a woman can earn only ten pice or about five cents a day by hard labor. I don't suppose many women would feel much like working five days for a prayer head covering like yours while their children were crying and going to bed hungry every night, do you? And then even if they should want to buy one like yours they couldn't get it or even the material like it in the bazaars or in the Dhamtari shops. Some of the missionaries receive coverings for themselves from America and some of them send to Calcutta for the most suitable material

that can be had, but if they were to make coverings for the Indian women who can't do it themselves I fear they would do nothing else but look after the prayer head coverings of the Indian sisters.

I am sending you some pictures I happen to have and I am sure you can see the coverings of the women. And I believe that if you were to take a picture of the girls of our Sunday School Class at home or of the one next to ours you could not see their coverings as well as these of the Indian women.

Don't think for a minute that these people are perfect. They are not, neither are the missionaries but they both try to uphold the doctrines of the Mennonite Church which they represent. If you notice, these women are dressed more plainly and simply and modestly than are many of the Mennonite sisters in America. And they would think it a very serious thing if they were to see some of the ornaments worn by their sisters in America. It is the custom for all women of India to wear all the jewels and gold and silver ornaments that they can and our Christian women, unjeweled, are marked among their own people more than you at home can ever know. I have heard of one woman who had a long struggle with herself, never going to sleep at night without her hand on the gold chain she wore round her neck. "If I had loved my Savior more, I should have loved my jewels less," she said when she took them off.



The Prayer Head Coverings Are Plainly Seen

The weather is delightful just now. I wish it would be like this all the time.

Lovingly your cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXV.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, October 28.

MY DEAREST ANNA:—

You should have seen us—two Bible women and myself—picking our way along the rice banks, goose-fashion, on the way to Sunday school last Sunday. I thought of

“Wire, brier, limberlock,
Three geese in a flock.”

There were no wires nor briars but we had to be limber all right to keep on the banks that separate the little fields.

Well, I went along to the village Sunday school about a mile from here early in the morning. After that I went to the Church house to Sunday school and preaching service, then to prayer meeting of the station missionaries at the other bungalow, and at five o'clock to Bible meeting. I'll be a regular “worker” next! Don't you see it coming?

But I must tell you about those village children, tho I haven't words to make you see them as they are. There were about fifty of them, mostly of the very poor families and there were so many pitiful looking cases that I wished I were a millionaire with a score of hands to help the poor things. The mothers work in the fields all day long, feed the

babies opium so they won't cry, and let them at home, and some of these were almost blind and crippled and deformed. And all were so dirty and had so little clothing! But when they saw me they laughed and nudged each other behind my back and the women told me they were curious about my dress and wanted to know how my hair got so pale. You see they all have black hair. And you ought to have seen them crowding around, begging and pleading and even fighting for a little picture card! I feel as if I could do almost anything to get cards enough to reach for all.

There was an old man, a village official, who came and stayed all thru the meeting and when we started to leave, would you believe it, he wanted a Sunday school card as badly as any of the children and we had none to give him.

From the picture you can see for yourself how they are listening to the Jesus story. Little one down in the corner has such sore eyes! The boy in the center looks hungry and lonely for some one to love him, don't you think? The one to the left in the front row seems to be thinking very seriously how splendid it would be to have such a God to worship and the two little girls seem rather shy, but all are listening as hard as ever they can.

The box I'm sending for Christmas isn't anything like what I wanted to send but we're not earning money to buy Christmas gifts. The box is

packed so tight full of love tho that maybe the other things will be mashed. I put in a glass bangle for each of the girls of the Sunday school class. These bangles tinkle on the arms of all the women and girls, for the Hindus wear numbers of them. Then if the husband d'ies the widow, even if she is a little



"Listening to the Jesus story"

girl, is some how considered guilty of his death and all her pretty bracelets are broken off, her necklaces and nice clothing are taken away, her hair is shaved, and she is given one skimpy meal a day. You can see some of the little girls in the picture wearing these bangles, and can you see any of the

queer little ornaments they are wearing about their necks to protect themselves from the evil spirits? Do you wonder they like to listen to the story of the Jesus of love when they have only fear for their gods?

Your cousin,

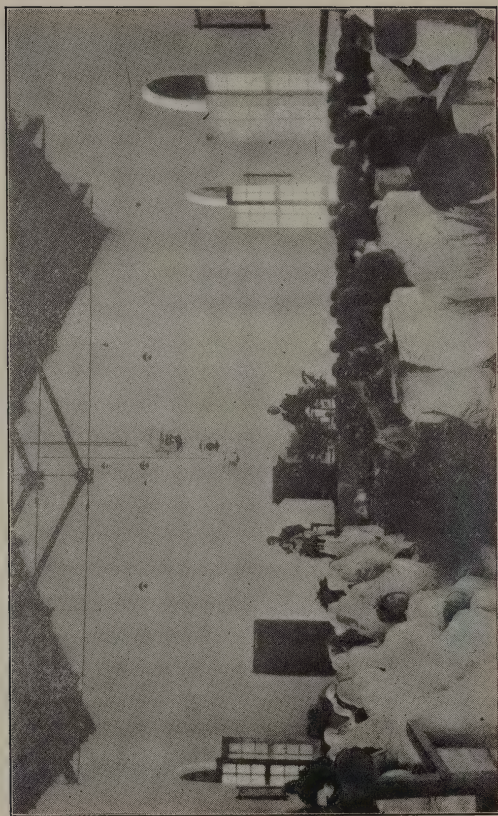
MARY.

LETTER NO. XXVI.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, November 13.

MY DEAR ANNA:—

I didn't mean it should be so long since I wrote you, but some how things have been happening so fast, you must forgive me. Mother is better again, tho she is still having fever in the evening every few days. She had an attack of malaria with a temperature of nearly 105 degrees about four hours each day for nearly a week. Malaria is not considered serious or dangerous here where it is so common but such chills, such fever, and then such perspiration I never did see. And the other missionary woman here has to keep chasing about after her own work, so I plunged in with all my might and main and helped Father take care of Mother besides trying to do her work, and you certainly would have laughed to see and hear me giving directions to the cook. It was Mother's week to look after the house-keeping too, and we almost had a catastrophe the other day when I told the cook to serve worms for dinner. He never even smiled and I wouldn't have known my mistake if the missionary hadn't heard me. I meant he should serve cucumbers. And then I told him to bring us some blind men when I only wanted eggs; I asked him about cutting the girl



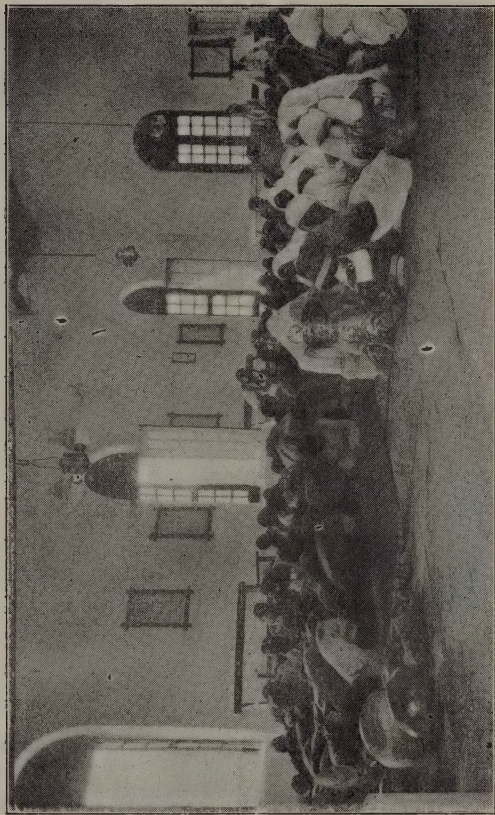
“About the platform it looked like a bazaar”

when I wanted to ask about the wood; I told him the butter was an old man when I only meant it was not good; and I asked him to bring a nice rope for Mother's breakfast when I wished to have some chicken broth.

Keeping house with a dictionary under one arm doesn't go as well as with a cook book. And then to add to it all, there was company one evening to dinner. A missionary from the jungle district stopped here one night on his way to take the train for Calcutta.

One day is set apart to be observed annually as a time of Thanksgiving, and so last Thursday was Thanksgiving day in the Mission and everybody was thankful. I made a bluff at it, but fear it wasn't exactly a success even if I didn't mention "home." But how can you pretend to be thankful and talk about giving thanks when you have nothing but warm water that has been boiled and filtered, and your Mother is so thirsty for a good drink of cold ice water? It was just about enough to give me a fever too when Mother had her hot stages and there was no ice to cool her and no cold water even to drink. I'd have given all my allowance for ice and we sent a telegram to Raipur for some to come each day but it never began coming at all until Mother was recovering.

But I went to Sundarganj to the Thank service there and got heartily ashamed of myself for trying



“How reverently the heads are all bowed”

to pretend or bluff thankfulness when everybody else was truly thankful even if they had nothing but rice water for breakfast and they were hungry for a lot of rice. And do you wonder that I was ashamed when I heard some of the people giving thanks to God for the blessings of the past year and naming me as one of them! So I guess I'll have to be worthy of their thanks and try to be as good as they think I am!

What sort of offering do you suppose was taken? There was some money of course but such a collection of grain, fruit, fowls, needlework, and "other articles too numerous to mention!" It was really amusing and about the platform where each one carried his own offering it looked like a bazaar. You can see pumpkins, eggs, and lemons in the pictures that I took from the front and back doors of the church building when the people did not know it. And do you see how reverently the heads are all bowed and the eyes are all closed in prayer? If these people were to hear the whispering that is done and see the irreverence that is shown by some of the people at home during prayer they would think they were not Christians, but heathen.

That one congregation gave over \$20.00 as a thank offering. If the congregations at home were to give as large a percentage of their income as these people gave, how much do you suppose it would be?

But Mother is having another chill and wants some blankets—I must go to her.

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXVII.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, November 20.

DEAR COUSIN:—

“Tis the harvest time” and the people are bringing in the sheaves of rice, while there are dozens of stacks in the open space in front of the bungalow some of which are already being threshed. The women carry the bundles, one at a time on their heads, while the men carry two bundles, one on either end of a stick carried on their shoulders. This stick, pointed at both ends, is really a sort of one-pronged fork, at least it is used as a fork in working with the grain.

The cultivation of this grain has been very interesting to us. The stalks are about four feet high and the head very much resembles that of barley. A great amount of water is needed for it, and the seed is sown, the plants are cultivated, and the grain ripens with the little fields all flooded to the depth of four or five inches of water. Ever since we have been here the people have been working in the fields, first weeding, then cutting the rice.

You remember the French artist Millet’s painting of “The Gleaners” we studied last year? Well if I were an artist I’d paint an “Indian Gleaners,” and it would be much like his for the people at

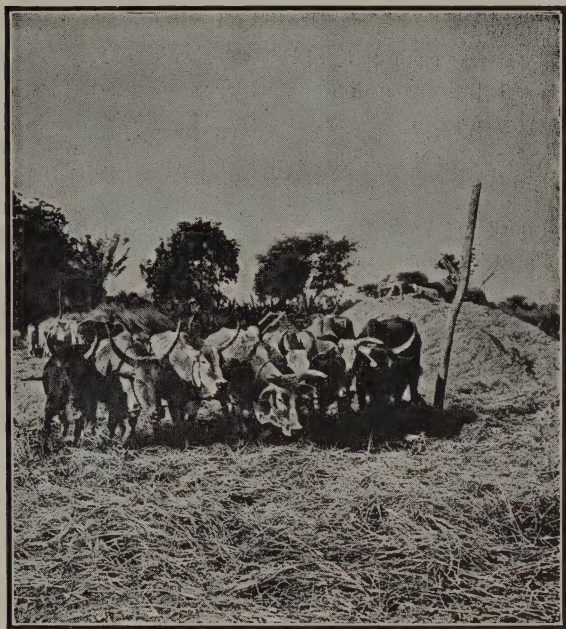
work look much like his peasants. And yet there is a difference in the expression of the people and their whole bearing that I believe could be painted better than told.

The sickles used for cutting the rice are much smaller than the one Grandfather has and used, and they don't ever seem to be sharp. They are a very useful implement indeed, for beside harvesting, they are used as a butcher knife to prepare vegetables for cooking, as a surgical instrument to burn the abdomens of the babies, and for all sorts of things we would never think of making a dull, roughly made sickle answer.

Husking and cleaning the rice are interesting processes too. The threshed rice is put in a hollowed log stood on end and then a wooden piece to fit the hole is made to work up and down in it. It makes me think of a big awkward mortar and pestle but it takes the husk off without polishing the grain and the rice is better than that at home.

Then to winnow the grain they have a simple sort of fanning mill,—a broad, flat instrument made of splints of bamboo and looking like a big dust pan. The women sit down on the ground beside a big heap of rice, and by shaking this fan up and down and from side to side in a certain way I haven't learned to do yet, they separate the chaff from the grain perfectly. Today I looked up and read—very slowly of course—this verse in Hindi:

"Whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner but the chaff he will burn



"The threshing machine is at work"

with unquenchable fire." The word for "fan" is *supa* which is the name of this winnowing instrument. It is used as a sort of fan to clean the thresh-



"The men carry two bundles, one on either end of a stick carried on their shoulders"

ing floor too. And now I understand that verse better. I guess some folks are like good grains of rice and the others are like chaff that doesn't amount to anything. Do you know where to find the verse? I didn't have to hunt very long.

The threshing machine is at work now—eight cattle tied abreast, one to a center pole around which they slowly walk, stamping out the grain.

Only one third of India's total area is arable and of the 619,000,000 acres under cultivation, more is under cultivation of rice than of any other grain. Nearly 77,000,000 acres are in rice or about one eighth of the total area under cultivation. Wheat comes next with about 25,000,000 acres. The total rice crop of India is about 30,000,000 tons. Around here I have not seen a single field of any other grain. There are a few truck patches, very few. So no wonder rice is the staff of life for these people. It is a most valuable food too, it is said, and sometime I'll give you the recipe for cooking rice Indian fashion.

It is about time for dinner now. If you were here I'd give you a taste of Indian fashion rice; that would save me the bother of sending the recipe. But since you aren't,—well I can't. I hear mother calling so I must close.

Yours,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXVIII.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, November 27.

MY DEAR ANNA:—

Last evening again, just before dusk, James and I went with Father and the other missionary here for a walk through the jungle. Father often goes for a little rest after he has had a long hard day of language study but he says he never sees any animals, only their tracks when I go along because I can't keep quiet long enough to hear Nature's sounds.

The jungle is beautiful, yes, but my idea of large trees, flowering bushes, and tropical looking vines was not a true picture of what it is at all. The Indian term jungle is properly applied to a desert and uncultivated region whether covered with forest trees, thick brushwood, or any coarse, rank vegetation. The large trees were all cut out of this jungle some years ago and it is too hot for ferns and flowers so there is only a dense underbrush. I have seen only one kind of wild flower in India—a beautiful spider lily, and it doesn't grow in the jungle but along the edges of the rice fields. They say, though, that several of the larger trees are covered with pretty blooms in the hot season.

Very few Indians have guns and faithful Hin-



Young Banana Plants and Papaiya

dus will not kill even a man-eating tiger so the animals do great damage and the Indians are glad to have the missionaries kill them and so protect them-



Cutting a Bunch of Bananas

selves, their cattle and their crops. Among the many wild animals are about a half dozen different kinds of deer, monkeys, bears, wild hogs, tigers, panthers, leopards, hyenas, jackals, wolves, wild cats,

wild dogs, and rabbits. I have not seen many of them but James and Father have, and I have seen their tracks.

But it was almost too much for my courage last evening when we ran on to a fresh tiger track. I'll let the men go hunting alone hereafter, I think. We measured the track with a stick and when we came home we found it was five inches across. Just think! That big old tiger was some place near here last night and will probably be tonight looking for his meal. I hope he will be satisfied with some wild animal and not attack any of the village cattle or worse yet, a man. There are man eaters not so far from here, and between here and Ghatula. They are tigers that have acquired a special liking for human flesh and no longer care for cattle. The missionary who visited here several weeks ago from a station 130 miles off the railroad has killed several of these man eaters. One of them was known to have eaten over 150 men, women, and children, and for his capture a large reward had been offered by the Government for some time.

Well last night after we were asleep I heard Father come into our room and get his gun. He said he heard that tiger just off the verandah and I pulled the cover all up over my head and didn't feel very comfortable even then. He went over to get the other missionary and after waiting a long time I heard them both laughing. The watchman

who was supposed to see that no animal carried us all off during the night had gone to sleep on the verandah outside Father's window and instead of hearing a tiger roar Father had heard an Indian snore. So that's one of our tiger stories.

They raise bananas here and we have just cut a large bunch of about two hundred. The trunk of this kind grows about sixteen feet high. It is really not a trunk at all but is formed by the stems of the fallen leaves. The leaves are about six feet long and one foot broad and are put to many uses by the Indian people. The great spikes of flowers hang down from the top of the plant and the fruits turn upward as they begin to grow so that a bunch of bananas in the stores at home hangs bottom side up. The plant is cut down when it has borne one bunch of fruit but sprouts from it continue to bear one after another. The bananas are only about four inches long, do not taste like the ones you get but they are good and we eat lots of them.

It's bedtime and a pack of jackals is making a hideous noise with their cries. That's one kind of lullaby song we go to sleep on and I must go now. But the same stars are shining overhead as with you and the same God is watching so our sleep can be just as sweet.

Goodnight,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXIX.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, December 4.

MY DEAR ANNA:—

Lizy, my pet lizard has retailed herself all right. The lost tail has been replaced by a new one and now I've learned from observation that animals **actually** do reproduce lost parts of the body. First a tiny, tender, pale-looking protuberance made its appearance and this gradually grew longer and stronger until now it looks to be almost as good a tail as its predecessor was. Lizy still lives behind the big picture above the table.

I'm still looking after the housekeeping every other week, and Indian ideas of cleanliness are a heavy cross for me, I must say. I'm getting so thirsty for one drink of cool clean water not boiled, taken from a clean well, in a clean bucket in which hands have not been washed, from a clean cup, which has been wiped on a clean cloth (not previously used as a muffler) washed in clean water in which there are no dreadful disease germs. Sometimes the things these people do are really funny and sometimes they are anything but funny. Today I found the woman who helps in the house cleaning my drinking cup in the dirty wash basin and yesterday the cook strained the mutton broth for soup through a rag

that was so black I couldn't see if it had ever been white or not. I suppose he always does it that way



Missicnary Baby and Indian Caretaker

and we think the soup good. It was a dish cloth he was using, he said.

The children have come back from school in

the high hills and there were some happy children and parents too. Three of them were in Naini Tal



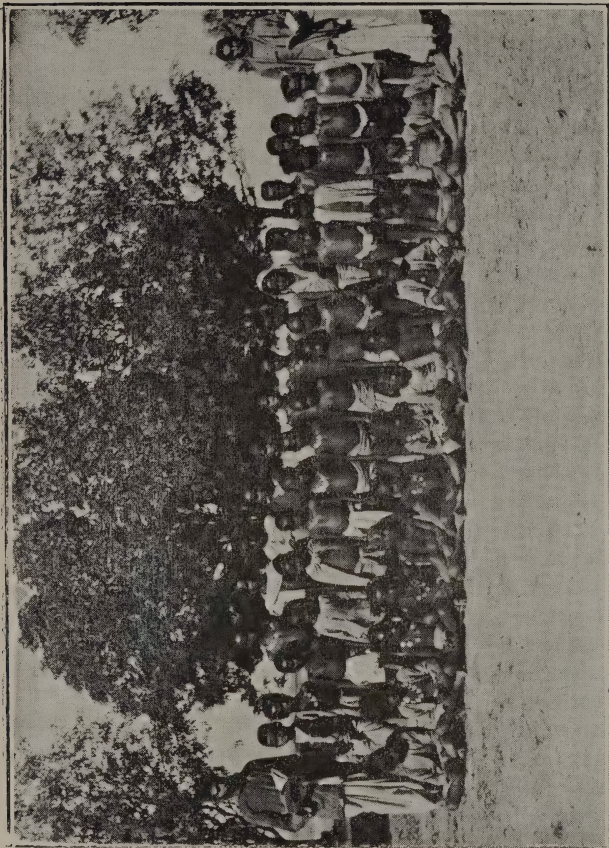
"There were some happy children"

and four in Darjeeling and hearing them talk makes me anxious to start to school in India. It is very different from school at home, I know that much

already. The other day one of the missionary children gave a little birthday dinner to eight of the Indian children whose parents are Christians and they all had a big time eating together on the floor with the fingers. There's quite a difference in the appearance of them and this bunch of Hindu children. And I believe there's just as much difference in lots of other ways.

I feel sorry for the missionaries' children, especially the smaller ones—there are so many, many things they are missing every day and never can have. But they are happy and don't know there is a country where they could be out on the grass bareheaded and barefooted and not need someone watching them every minute, and they seem to love their Indian caretakers very much.

This week we house-cleaned and I wondered if the place ever would be itself again. Surely, it must have been just as surprised as I was at the transformation. First they whitewashed—not with brushes but with a sort of mop made of hemp and tied on to a long stick. The doors, windows, and everything within reach seemed to get ten times as much white as the walls and ceiling, but after several women had carried barrels of water and worn out some brooms cleaning up the surplus lime it looked like a new place. The walls look so nice and white where they had been all streaked and stained from the effect of the heavy rains. But housecleaning in A-



Heathen Children

merica is not to be compared with the process here.
I'm glad it comes only once a year.

Your loving cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXX.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, December 11.

MY DEAR COUSIN ANNA:—

This morning as I was cleaning out a drawer where nothing eatable has ever been kept I saw a solitary ant plodding its lonely beat. But that isn't the only ant I've seen today. Here in India it is not necessary for the sluggard to "go" to the ant to consider her ways, she comes to him. And if you were to get down on the ground to study the way of the ants, some of them would soon be studying you. They demonstrate in the center of the sitting room as well as every other room of the house; you can sit in your dining chair and watch them, you can lie in bed and watch them, you can go about and try not to see them and even then they force themselves on your notice,—big ants, little ants, and middle sized ants of several species; red ants, white ants, and black ants of a dozen kinds. It was a big black ant I found in the drawer. Then in the bedroom the middle sized ants have just discovered that our new box of quinine pills is sugar-coated.

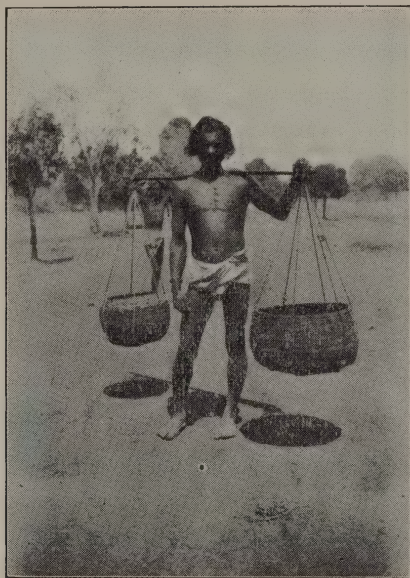
You see one of the ways of ants we have to consider is their maintaining a patrol system that extends to the whole house. I don't know how often all the places are patrolled but I do know that

all food left unprotected is found in a short time and that not an inch of the house escapes them. If the sugar bowl is left on the dining table it is discovered and filled with little ants in a few minutes.

In our open warfare with them, their attacks and our defenses win by turns. They invade the cupboard and we stand it in old tin cans of water; then they learn to cross over on the dust that settles in the water, and we add a disinfectant, and think the place is impregnable. But then something is left standing against the cupboard or a leg gets pushed against the side of the tin and thousands of ants march into every article of food giving it a flavor all their own.

A big red ant builds its nest in trees and fortunately does not come indoors. It has mandibles for biting and it hurts to be bitten by one of them. But the worst of all is the little insect commonly known as the white ant, which is really a termite. We had heard so much of their spoiling pictures, ruining books, and honeycombing wood that we thought we were having a care for them. This morning I saw some of the covered roads of the white ants near my bag that had been standing on the floor by the bed since I came back from Calcutta. I picked it up in a hurry but the bottom was all plastered over with mud and one side was so completely riddled that you could see through it at dozens of places. That trial was about the limit of

my endurance. It was the nice leather traveling bag the girls of our Missionary Society gave me. But the only thing to do was to keep counting ten just



Our Delivery Wagon

as fast as I could over and over until I got in a good humor again and then give the useless bag to the servant's children. But I want you to know that missionaries have lots of trials that people at

home never think about, and they're too brave to tell them if they could.

Though they are destructive, these white ants are interesting creatures. Their large dwellings in the form of irregular pyramids or cones are raised to the height of ten or fifteen feet and are strong enough to bear the weight of several people. James and I were on a big one out toward the jungle the other day. Each of these structures is divided into various apartments, chambers and galleries, which have their specific uses, like the rooms of a house. At the top is a well-aired empty attic; the next story is the nursery with shelves on which the young termites are hatched; the second story is a hall supported by pillars; and the ground story contains the royal chamber where the king and queen are imprisoned and are attended by a detachment of workers, the chambers of the worker termites, and store chambers. From the ground story are holes in the ground out of which the material used in making the nest is dug.

I'm enclosing a picture of the delivery wagon that usually brings things from Dhamtari for us.

Your loving Cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXXI.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, December 18.

MY OWN DEAR COUSIN:—

The big box arrived yesterday and we are keeping it until Christmas eve. I go out and look at it every little while though, and it makes me feel sort o' "Christmassy" even if everything else seems funny and unnatural for Christmas time. Just think this is only our first Christmas out of America, and the time has been so long, and I wonder how many more of them there will be! Everybody here has too much else to do to make much of the holiday in the way you do at home, but I am helping to rig up some presents for each of the Christian and orphan children here that cost a half cent. Don't you think they may be overwhelmed by so much? I wish I had a hundred dollars to spend for clothing and fruit for them.

No, we don't live on a perpetual diet of rice and pepper! Today again our "special" was roast venison and gravy, and, with roselle sauce and mashed potatoes, it leaves nothing of food to be desired.

There are many species of deer, and since the meat is valuable for the table Father goes hunting whenever he has time. We have a beautiful speckled deer skin on the floor now.

And then several days ago we had a number of meals of wild hog meat again and it is ever so much better than your pork. These wild hogs are much larger than the domesticated ones and their stiff bristles and short hair form sort of a crest all along the backbone. They are very swift and strong and fierce and can inflict dangerous wounds with their curving tusks. They will fight and win out with even a tiger, so you may imagine it would be rather exciting to hunt them. The men usually go out for them in the late evening for they feed in the night time on grains, nuts, and roots of different kinds. This last one that Father shot was a big fellow four feet high and weighing four hundred pounds. His lower tusk measures eight inches and it is sharp like a shears. James was along out this time and he'll have to write you how the men climbed trees to watch and wait for the animals and were almost asleep when they heard a big drove coming and then saw about a hundred hogs with this large one in the lead. The men tie up limbs and make sort of a seat on a tree about twenty feet from the ground and then have their guns ready.

The roselle is a pretty annual plant growing about four feet high and bearing rather large red flowers. The thick, juicy, petals of the flowers are used to make sauce and jelly which taste very much like that made from cranberries. It is grown in the missionaries' gardens and is used a great deal



Our Gardener

by them. The flowers have been ready for use now for some time and we have made some jelly for the hot season. I have just heard that the growing of the roselle is destined to be a large industry in southern California and Florida where it has been introduced and can be cultivated, and that it will be a rival of the cranberry in the United States. I'll do my share to make it such when I come back.

Enclosed is a picture of our gardener (mali in Hindi, and pronounced almost like Molly). Just now I see him bringing in some string beans and lettuce for dinner. For dessert we'll have stewed guavas with lemon sauce.

The guava is a delicious fruit, about the size and shape of a pear. It is nice eaten raw, also, and the jelly is fine. That doesn't sound like rice morning, noon, and evening, does it?

Sincerely Yours,

MARY.

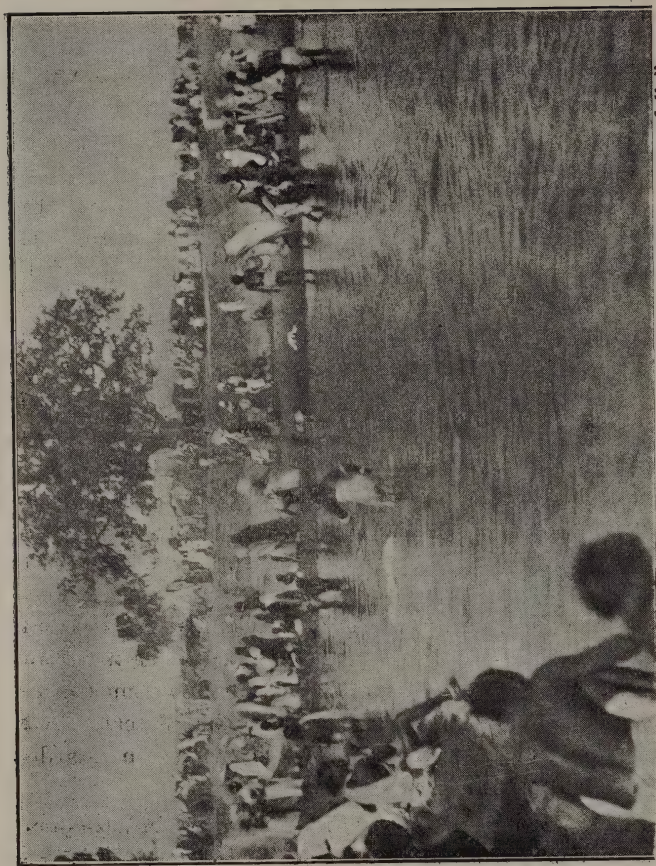
LETTER NO. XXXII.

Balodgahan, C. P., India, December 25.

DEAR ANNA:—

It's Christmas evening here and I guess it's just about six o'clock Christmas morning with you. You are all coming down stairs laughing and calling, "Merry Christmas!" And last eve you were all together at Grandfathers. About that time this morning here I heard Mother singing, "Do they miss me at home?" and I ran off as fast as I could to the girls' orphanage to scare away the lump in my throat. They were in the very thickest of Christmas, wearing their newest clothes and their brightest smiles, and every one of the girls gave me such a hearty Christmas greeting that I haven't dared let my mouth droop all day long and it has been a really, truly, merry Christmas time, even though it is on the other side of this old earth where a snowflake never falls and where now the leaves are greenest and the flowers are brightest. And think of having peas and radishes from the garden for Christmas dinner!

The books and papers and pictures and peppermint drops from the box made us all feel as if we were at home. All the missionary folk managed to get together for several hours last eve and they



"On the other side of this old earth where a snowflake never falls"

15. EXHIBITION OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS SOCIETY, NEW YORK, 1917. THE
GALLERY WAS FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO WERE INTERESTED IN THE
WORK OF THE SOCIETY.

laughed and talked and then sang hymns, and no one seemed to think of the great difference between here and there, or else they were just too brave to even let themselves know it. And Anna, somehow the real meaning of Christmas has come to me more clearly than ever before. I guess I always thought so much of gifts and celebrations that I forgot the true meaning of the day.

The Christians' houses are all as gay and clean as can be for the occasion, for everyone freshly plasters and paints the walls with mud and then decorates them with little Sunday school lesson picture cards or a big picture if they are so fortunate as to be able to get one from the missionaries. Then they like to cut letters out of bright colored paper and make Scripture text mottoes for the walls of their homes.

This afternoon each family had their best meal of the whole year,—the best they could afford,—rice, of course, and dal and curries and breads and sweets and fruits. And I'm beginning to thoroughly enjoy it,—all but the super-abundance of pepper. The food all tastes of *ghce*, and I didn't appreciate this at first. You know *ghee* is clarified butter. The milk is somehow boiled and churned so as to yield a form of fat free from curd, whey, or water and this keeps better than ordinary butter. No big native meal is complete unless *ghee* is used in some

form or other, and the missionaries use it in the preparation of many meat and vegetable dishes.

How I do wish you were here to share everything new with me. One day I am satisfied here and the next I am miserably wretched and homesick and lonely. It is nice and cool now, the weather couldn't be more delightful. We built a roaring fire this morning in the fireplace, but it doesn't seem to give any warmth except the looks and sound, and Mother keeps shivering whenever she isn't right up to the fire. There are little Indian stoves that look like iron kettles that people use, but they don't warm the room either. And so everyone wears a coat or shawl in the house where it is coolest. I haven't needed any yet, though.

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXXIII.

Dhamtari, C. P., India, January 8.

DEAREST ANNA:—

We have just attended the Jalsa, a series of meetings lasting four days and corresponding somewhat in character to a Bible Conference at home. For this annual meeting practically all the Christians had gathered. Some of them are alone in villages forty miles away and are not able to attend regular Church services with others and they look forward to this time as a real treat. It gave me a queer, new, enthusiasm for our India Mission to look over that congregation of hundreds of people of another color and language and nationality and then to hear them sing, "To the Work, to the Work," and make plans for carrying forward the work of our God and our Church. The children had their separate meetings and enjoyed them as much as the grown-ups.

Try to imagine a beautiful October evening, a lot of huts made from bamboo matting, in front of each little hut a fire around which the family, clean and nicely clothed, are warming themselves, on the fires shining brass cooking vessels of rice and curry, the air full of the smell of smoke and spices, a larger canvas tent for one of the missionary families,

and a large rude roof of branches and grass under which the evening meeting will soon be held, and then try to imagine all this in the very midst of Hinduism and Mohammedanism. This is a picture of the Christian Jalsa.

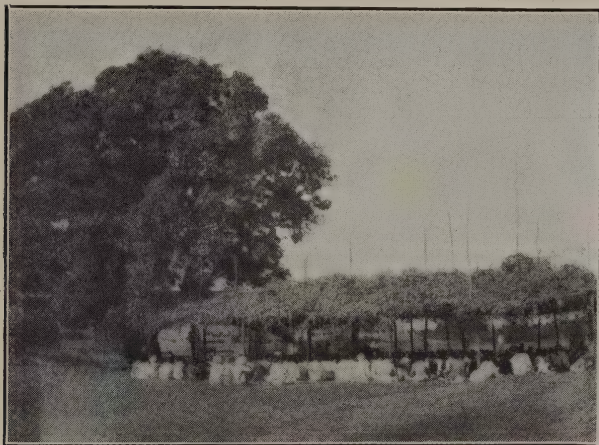
You will take notice of our address. At last we are settled in our own bungalow in Dhamtari. I should have said in a bungalow to ourselves for



Dhoby and Bullock

it is not owned even by the Mission but is rented for us. Besides the three Mission bungalows and a dak bungalow, a Government house where travelers are allowed to halt and rest, this is the only bungalow in the town. It is a small house and I have the veranda for a room. There are shades of bamboo splints to keep the curious people from seeing me and it is nice and airy even if it hasn't

much furniture or decoration. But in the evenings and mornings I sometimes wish for a furnace and warm carpets. I don't know just how clean and free from snakes and scorpions it is going to be, though. But lest a thief should come about the



The Jalsa

place we have a night watchman, and he'll watch the snakes too while I sleep.

I'd like to send you a *dhoby* to relieve you from your share of the trials of washing and ironing for I know you hate it all as much as I do. One *dhoby* (washerman) takes the clothing of all the missionaries to his own house, washes them on a stone at

a tank made specially for that purpose at one of the Mission wells, dries them on the grass in the hot sun, and after ironing them, brings them back clean and white. For the four of us this all costs about three dollars a month, beside the buttons. I don't think they'll be more than that, though a lot of them are lost in the process. But one does not wonder the buttons come off when you see the dhoby hit that stone with the clothing. He hits it with such force you wonder why the stone doesn't break. This is one of the wonders of this land of India, and there are many.

Your cousin,

MARY.

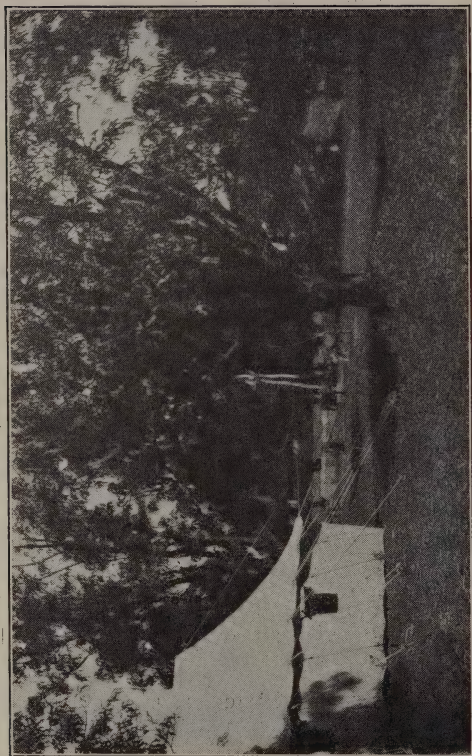
LETTER NO. XXXIV.

Lendera, C. P., India, January 22.

DEAR COUSIN AT HOME:—

First I want to tell you where we are. We have packed tent with necessary furnishings and belongings and are touring for several weeks out among the villages, away from the main roads, fifty miles from railway or white man. As nearly as I can find out, white women have never before been in these out-of-the-way places, and the people are very curious indeed after their fears have been allayed. This tent life isn't all romance and pleasure, though we have been very comfortable without suffering any real hardships.

But to begin with, we forgot the oven for our coal oil stove, a tin opener, and a clock. So we have to eat and go to bed when we get hungry and sleepy, open our tinned provisions with a very dull knife, and eat *chapatties* (a kind of native bread fried in ghee or oil) since the little supply of bread we brought with us became exhausted. We eat lots of rice and vegetable curry and though we have a few knives and forks with us I'm practicing eating with my fingers so I can do it respectably when food is given us by the people. I'm beginning to be able



"In the shade of some large mango trees"

to do it quite skilfully, shooting the rice into my mouth without missing a single grain.

It seems that to the Hindu food is sacred in a sense we cannot know. A Brahman can eat only after he is ceremonially purified and if I were to look at his cooked food it would be defiled. So we can never eat with people in their homes. Often people give us a meal but neither they nor we can think of anything but for us to eat it alone; and when the food is brought, be they more cultured or ignorant, everyone considers it discourteous to say the least, to watch us eat, and retires until we have finished.

Well, the second drawback we had was a down-pour of rain night before last. There is sometimes a little rain about the first of January, not enough to saturate the ground, but this one was enough to completely saturate our tent and all its contents, us included. However, we were glad that we weren't in the bed of a swollen stream with a broken ox-yoke waiting in the rain while the *tonga wala* went to the nearest village to borrow another yoke; and we were glad that our oxen hadn't drowned and all our luggage floated away in a dangerous stream. Such things have happened to missionaries here. And though it wasn't just exactly convenient we occupied the tent until the sun came out again, then dried ourselves and luggage and came on to this village.

The tent is pitched in the shade of some large mango trees near the village and from here the missionaries and Indian workers do systematic visitation in all the villages nearby. After we have been here about three or four days we will move on again, for there are scores of villages in the district where no one has ever gone to tell the glad tidings of salvation from sin. The Indian colporter and his wife



"Glad our luggage hadn't
floated away"

have a small tent, too, and they are not half-hearted workers, for long after we have turned in for the night I can hear them explaining the meaning of some Scripture passage to some of these ignorant and down-trodden people who have little form of worship and many of whom remember their gods and try to appease them only when sickness, famine, or trouble of some kind comes to them. And some-

times after I have gone to sleep I am aroused by some familiar Christian *bhajan* being sung.

I'm tired. I've been writing this by lantern light and all is quiet save for the bells of our oxen nearby. My bed is just outside the tent door and I'll soon be going to sleep watching the soft Indian stars light up the deep blue heavens.

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXXV.

Churia, C. P., India, January 29.

DEAR COUSIN:—

A tiny little bit of the meaning of the life of the Indian villagers is coming to me these days. The condition of the children is the most pitiable, I think. They seem almost wild with unlimited freedom in so many things and yet they are bound by caste with positively no hope of freedom from its every rule. A sense of an absolutely unchangeable fate controls every one of these people. If you try to rouse them to something better or appeal to them to move upward they will always say, "That is for you, but it is written on our foreheads that we must be so." As a newly born child lies by its mother's side they believe that the ruler of the world writes a sketch of its whole career on its forehead and what is written is inevitable. A low caste man has been born in the position which he deserves and any attempt to raise himself out of that position is meddling with Providence. If some one is unfortunate why should he struggle against fate? His lot is inevitable because it is his fate.

If a young girl married in babyhood has lost her husband it must be her fate and no one sympathizes with her in the least. You know one of the

heaviest curses of Hinduism falls upon the widows for they are supposed to be responsible for the husband's death, having caused it by some sin of their own in one of their previous lives. Of the 154,000,000 women in India, one in every six is a widow so you can imagine the misery there is when they are shunned by all, even their own families.

The people implicitly believe that all the experiences of a man's life are arranged by the deity, and that it is useless to oppose them. This belief hinders all high thoughts and noble efforts and even causes the death of many. The other year when the Bubonic plague was so bad in this part of the country preventive measures would not be tried by many of the people because they thought that if it was written that a man should die he must die, whatever medical efforts were made or expense incurred, and so the missionaries found it hard to persuade the Hindu carpenters and sawyers and cowherds to be inoculated for the plague. It is very pitiful to hear the people say over and over again, "It is written," as though that is all that could be said. Oh I am so glad that I know I have a part to do, and that God helps me to rise above the low, and I guess I had to come to India to realize how glad I am.

This morning a half starved dog crawled under our tent and somehow found and ran off with the little flour we had left, so now we'll have to eat rice



A Village Scene

and dal bread, but they are nice little cakes fried in oil. That is, they are nice for a meal or two, but I have visions of slices of white bread spread with butter.

Just now I had a beautiful surprise! I looked out of the tent flap and saw our *Chaprassi* coming with a big bag over his shoulder. Mother had sent our mail and I had to stop and read over the second time my thirteen letters and seven post cards. You see I'm out here with one of the other missionaries and his wife. Father and Mother are to spend their time for a year in getting the language, but Mother goes out with the Bible women now two mornings out of the week.

Callers have come so I must go. The wife of the village owner and her servant have come to see the inside of the tent and us, and to ask questions. The questions these women ask are something like this:

What is your caste?

Are you a widow?

Where are your jewels, then?

Why do you not have oil on your hair?

What relatives have you?

Where are they?

Why did you leave them?

What do you want here?

And then the missionary has the opportunity of telling them just why she left her own country.

Then, when they hear about Jesus for the first time, they usually just stare and nod their heads. They somehow can't understand it at all right away. And no wonder, it is so different. Poor things!

Lovingly,

MARY.

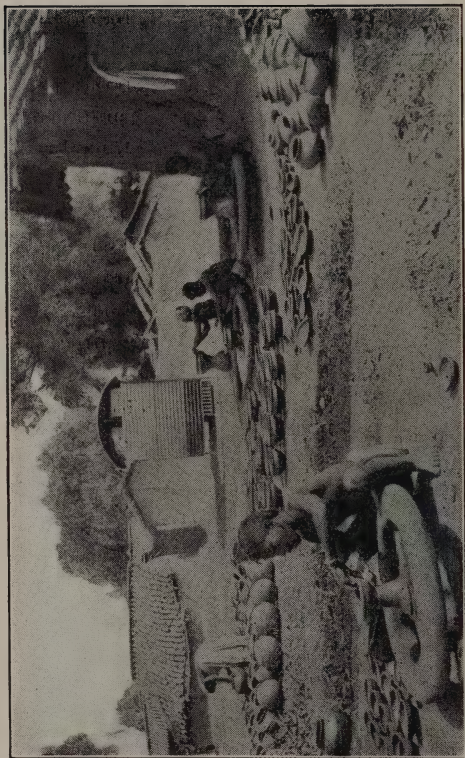
LETTER NO. XXXVI.

Dhamtari, C. P., India, February 5.

DEAR ANNA:—

My first touring journey is accomplished and I am so glad I had the chance to go. With many halts from one village to another, crossing empty rice fields, now and then on a stony road or a rough one worn over the rice banks by cart wheels, and then on no road at all we came on until last evening we reached home. Our two wheeled tonga almost turned over more than once. We came through much jungle and one stretch where everything made you think of tigers and where a man eater has been devouring a number of persons lately. I asked the missionary what we would do if a tiger should come and he said, "We'll just pray to God. Don't you suppose He can manage tigers as well as lions?" And I guess He can, anyhow no tiger came, but after twilight in that lonely part when everything was quiet, the jackals and dogs barking didn't sound very comforting.

In several villages the people were very shy and the women and children ran out of sight at first. At one place where our tent had arrived before us and which we reached about sundown the cookboy had prepared no food as the headman of the village



"I went down to the potter's house"

said he would give us food. When it came the curry was so burning hot that the next morning my whole inside still smarted, and I felt as if my throat were as long as a giraffe's,—it was sore all the way down and a mustard plaster had to be used to cure it.

At another place they would not allow us to draw water from the village well for fear our buckets would defile it. But they drew the water for us in their own vessels and then poured it into ours. These people were of the lower castes too. Of course we boiled all the water we drank but even then we were afraid to drink from some of the village tanks and always carried some water with us for an emergency.

Only once were we treated rudely, several times we were politely shown that we were not wanted in a village, but usually the people were all very friendly and as we drove away they would smile and salaam and say, "Come back soon again." I wonder how long it will be before someone can go.

We were in one village where the potters live and I enjoyed watching them work, never taking their hands from the lump of shapeless clay until the vessel was finished. They make only the coarsest grade of earthenware and do not glaze the vessels. Most of them look red and rough like brick when they have been burned. To make a vessel a dough-like mass of clay is fastened to a sort of horizontal wheel called a potter's wheel, and then

by turning the wheel the potter shapes the clay, first into a cone and then into the vessel he wants. The vessels at the right and left of this picture are called *gharas* and are used for carrying and holding water and also for cooking food. We keep our drinking water in such vessels, one on the back veranda and one in each bedroom. The vessels in the center of the picture are used in cooking while the smaller ones are lids for the *gharas*.

"I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he was making a work on the wheels. And when the vessel that he made was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it." The missionary quoted this Scripture text while we were watching and saw the potter make over a spoiled piece. I didn't even know there was such a verse in the Bible, nor this one either, did you? "But now, O God, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter: and we are the work of thy hand." I guess sometimes I'm a pretty tough, hard, old lump of clay to work with. I wonder what kind of vessel He can make out of me anyhow. But I really want to be, "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Yours,
MARY.

LETTER NO. XXXVII.

Dhamtari, C. P., India, February 19.

MY DEAR ANNA:—

Don't you have the least bit of a doubt as to whether any more medical missionaries will be needed here in India. I wish you could see the sick. It would be enough to convince the most unsympathetic. Today in the dispensary you would have seen the blind, the halt, the lame, the fever-stricken,—just such a crowd as I imagine came to Jesus so often when He was here upon earth. Like a stream they passed before the missionary and her trained nurse helper until long after dispensary hours and meal-time but they did not stop until the last sufferer had been relieved and I wanted to see the very last of them. They came with pneumonia, bronchitis, rheumatism, and many other diseases. One woman came to show the itch on her child's body, a raw, bloody patch as large as my two hands. Another old woman asked for some liniment for the pain in her back which proved to be caused by a beating from her husband. It seems to be a very hard thing to get a correct history of their ailments from these people and for this reason treating them takes a long time.

Several days ago a man brought his little boy

to the dispensary with a very high fever, and looking as if he were about to die. He was the only child and having been in the hands of ignorant witch doctors for some time the father looked despairing and hopeless as he said, "Can't you do something for him?" To see the look of joy and gratitude on the faces of the parents and to hear the "salaams" today when they took him home again well on the way to recovery was enough to pay the missionary for all that had been done, I am sure. This is the kind of thing you can do over and over again when you get your medical training and come out here, Anna.

Then there was a man who brought his wife after having cut a great gash in her face in the attempt to cut off her nose. The Indian law says that the wife is the property of her husband to do with as he pleases and because this woman had not been just as useful as he thought a wife should be the husband had done this, considered to be an act of the greatest disrespect. Afterwards he feared she was going to die and came here for surgical attention. You can't realize what an awful thing it means to be born a woman in India. I have heard of a Brahman bringing his wife to the hospital for an operation and saying to the medical missionary, "You may do whatever you please with her. She is of no use to me now."

Then there were many little children with en-

larged spleens, and so many malaria cases. Ulcers, some of them enormous ones, were treated, and ever so many sore eyes. And so it is at each of the stations where there is a medical dispensary, a doctor



One of the "Halt"

would not be without all the work that could possibly be done.

Anna, here is the opportunity for anyone thinking of a doctor's or nurse's profession. Just imagine, in the United States there is one doctor to every five or six hundred people and then they are rushed, they think, in an epidemic. Here there is

one doctor for a million women. They need men doctors very much also, but they do need women doctors and women nurses, oh so much! Do you suppose the suffering of the people here is any less just because their skin is brown? So if you are not afraid of hard work and you want to relieve the most suffering, come along, here's the place for you. And I'm with you, Anna! Yes, I'm coming home to take a nurse's training course and then come back here to work. I did think I didn't want all the hard things that must belong to life here, but I guess one isn't worth very much if they're afraid of hard things. And there are just so many things everywhere waiting for some one to do them that I just have to come back and do what I can.

Your cousin,

MARY.

P. S. Anna did I say that wild hog was four feet *high*? *Well* I should have said four feet *long*. It was a big hog all right, but not as big as a cow. We are having wild peacock for dinner today.

LETTER NO. XXXVIII.

Dhamtari, C. P., India, February 26.

MY DEAREST ANNA:—

A “compound” here in the East means the enclosure in which a house stands, and so after this when you read of a Mission Compound, don’t think of some drug or of a mixture, unless you think of the buildings and people—American and Indian—as the mixture. There are certainly enough of them when in one compound here at Dhamtari (the Sundarganj compound and first land owned by the Mission) there are three missionary bungalows with smaller buildings used for storing grain, wood, grass, straw, etc.; the English High School; boys’ orphanage; and Industrial shop. You can imagine it is a pretty busy place. The whole compound is enclosed by a high stone wall and just back of the enclosure is the Sundarganj mango grove with several hundred mango trees. The words “Sundar” and “ganj” mean “beautiful treasure” and was the name of the plot of land on which had been located the compound and the mango grove, before our Mission was established there.

In all some twenty acres belong to the Mission. On two sides of the land is the city of Dhamtari and on the other two sides are level fields that

stretch away out to the horizon. These fields are just dotted over with little brown villages. The other evening James and I took a walk all around the mango grove and we could see the smoke rising from over a dozen of these villages. And at present not one Christian is living in any of these villages. So you see there is plenty of room for you and a lot of others, too.

What do you suppose I've been longing for all week? A good sleigh ride. But the cool season is ended and there wasn't even a suggestion of frost. Following the rains was the moist, trying, unhealthy, heat of September and October, then the pleasant cool season and now there will be dry, hot, weather with thick dust clouds rising above the roads and fields, until the first rain clouds gather again in June. The missionaries say last year it was 118 degrees on the porches of the bungalow, (not just at noon for a day or two, but for weeks, and very little cooler at night) and the ground gets so hot that the people who can get rags wrap their feet in them to protect them from the burning ground. Not many people about here wear shoes you know. It must be a terrible heat and I often wonder how the missionaries can endure it so long, especially those who must be out much of the time looking after building work and going from station to station. The Indian Christians themselves say they

could not have stood what two of the missionary men did last summer, and it's their own climate.

Tomorrow we are to have company. The General Secretary of the India Sunday School Union is to come, and I'm all excited. They say the first Sunday school in India was established in 1803 when three boys were the founders and teachers. Now there are about 17,000 Sunday schools with over 850,000 teachers and scholars speaking 45 languages. That sounds like *progress*, doesn't it? But only yesterday I heard someone say, "The parable tells of ninety-nine sheep out of a hundred in the fold and one out on the hills in danger; in India one is in the Christian fold and ninety-nine are away on the hills astray." That sounds like a command to *progress*! I wonder why more folks can't hear it, don't you?

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XXXIX.

Dhamtari, C. P., India, March 5.

DEAR COUSIN:—

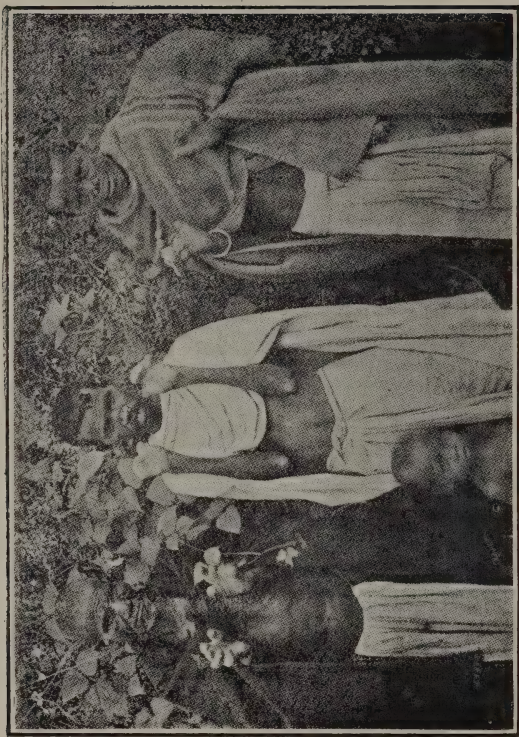
Last Sunday afternoon I went along to services at the Korlin Khana or Leper Asylum and I shall never forget the horrible afflictions of those people trying to walk to the church house, their earnest faces as they listened to the missionary, and their queer sounding voices as they sang. Some of them are far along in the stages of that dreadful disease, with fingers and toes all gone, with half the palms or the whole hands wasted away, with feet that are mere stumps, with nose and ears eaten away, and with eyes that have been blinded.

We all sat on chairs at one end of the little church building while the lepers sat in rows on the floor facing us with a sort of railing or fence between us. After the services we stood on our side of the railing and many of them came up to the railing on their side to raise their fingerless hands to their foreheads and to say "salaam" to us. I just can't describe those poor suffering people and it gave me a tremendous chill that repeats itself every time I think of them, to be in the same room with them and to smell the disinfectant all around. Everything was nice and clean and their wounds

were all bandaged but to see their stubs, suggesting death and decay is just like torture and I tried to look at the flowers outside in the compound so I wouldn't see them. I know we can't realize what a terrible thing this loathsome disease is or how unendurable it must seem to a person who first notices some sores on the fingers, finds they do not yield to ordinary treatment, and then hears the doctor pronounce it leprosy.

Can you imagine yourself in the place of the beautiful and educated young Indian girl who was just about to be married when she was taken ill with the disease and had to be sent to the leper asylum to avoid spreading it by contagion? And can you imagine how she must have felt when she first entered the institution and saw the women among whom she had to live the rest of her life? But forgetting herself, she began to help those women and more than one hundred persons have become Christians because of her influence. I thought I was good and brave and heroic to decide to live and work in India but I feel about as big as a needle's eye when I think of this little Indian girl working cheerfully away in a leper asylum.

And just think of the two million lepers! One person out of every eight hundred in the world is afflicted with leprosy! If these lepers all could be properly segregated there could be no contagion and it is said that in a comparatively few years lep-



Results of Leprosy

rosy would be off the face of the earth. But here they are not separated from other people and many are allowed to live with their families as if they were healthy. Did you know that in the United States, Louisiana has a hospital for lepers in which there are about one hundred? And did you know about the Mission to Lepers in India and the East, an organization centered at Dublin and supported by contributions from anyone who wants to co-operate to rid the world of leprosy and wants to help in carrying out the command of Jesus Christ to "Cleanse the lepers?" This agency has no missionaries of its own but works in harmony with the Protestant Missions of other societies and thru missionaries, supporting both lepers and the untainted children of lepers. And so altho our Mennonite Mission has the direct management of the Leper Asylum as well as the one hundred and fifty inmates, it is owned and financed by this Leper Mission that has over one hundred of these asylums scattered over the world.

There are about nine acres of land on which is a dispensary, a home for untainted children, a church, and a number of other buildings. Very soon however a new asylum is to be erected, much larger than the present one and much better fitted to care for the unfortunates who have no one to care for them.

Yours,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XL.

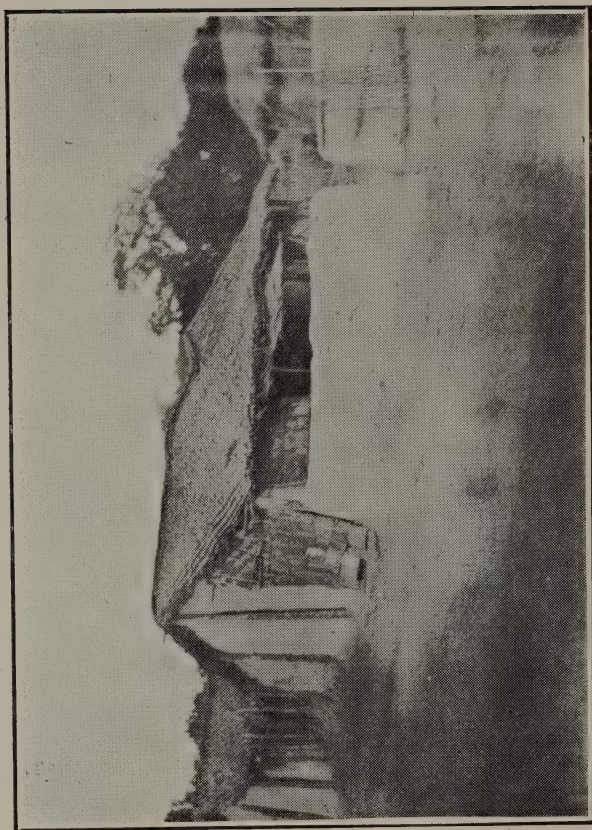
Dhamtari, C. P., India, March 12.

DEAR COUSIN ANNA:—

When Mother and the Bible women go to visit the women of a certain friendly, high caste family I am allowed to go along because they always beg Mother to bring me. So I have been to the *zenanas* a number of times and it's as much a novelty for the shut-in women to have us come to see them as it is for me to go. But nothing very exciting or romantic or remarkable ever happens when I'm along—no miraculous escape from an angry mob or marvelous conversion of a whole household or anything like that. But one morning when I went along to a village an old Brahman would not let us in his house and chased us away. I could not follow all he said but I understood, "Go!—No Christian shall ever come into this street." He talked so angry and looked as if he might jump upon us and I began to think I might be one of the martyr missionaries, but the oldest Bible woman only smiled and said something about it's not being very encouraging; we'd have to go there another time. I think I'll not go along to that village the next time. Soon after we arrive at a better class house, a little tray is brought on which is some pan and spices. Of

course we explain that we do not use pan but for the sake of hospitality they urge and we take some of the cardamon seeds and cloves. I like the cardamon seeds and since they are in a sort of little husk they are clean and we are not afraid to eat them.

Pan is the leaf of the *betel* (pronounced beetle), a climbing plant of the pepper species which is used to make a mixture that is extensively chewed in this country. Into the leaf is rolled a piece of the *areca* or betel nut, a little lime, some *catechu* and cardamon seeds; the whole is made into a parcel and pinned with a clove. This mixture is munched but not swallowed and the custom of using it is so continuous and common with both men and women that the proper handling of pan is an important part of the etiquette in every house. It is hot and biting, they say, and makes a person not used to it dizzy and sleepy; it blackens the teeth and makes them decay very rapidly. No good comes from its use and it is not at all elegant for it tinges the saliva, gums, and lips a blood red. Indeed the pan chewing habit is an evil so great in many ways that serious efforts are being made in India to check it. But I suppose the Indian thinks it is just as beautiful and manly to chew his pan as the American in good society does to smoke his tobacco. I do not think pan chewing is any more absurd or unreasonable or foolish than the tobacco habit is at home,



A Typical House in Dhamtari

for it surely isn't elegant to have the mouth black and foul and defiled with tobacco and it isn't at all elegant to set fire to one end of a roll of leaves and to suck at the other end and have the smoke puffing out from both ends.

The betel plants are cultivated extensively by a certain caste and because of the climate about here they are cultivated under rude sheds. The betel nut is the fruit of the beautiful areca palm, brown on the outside, mottled on the inside like a nutmeg and of the size of a nutmeg. The same palm yields the astringent juice called *catechu*.

Just now I hear the cries of mourners. Somebody in one of the mud huts over there has died. I wish the people at home could get a glimpse of the mud huts of Dhamtari and could know their people and see the hopelessness in time of sorrow. At home you get accustomed to hearing and reading about them but do not let their bitter cries for help penetrate your consciousness, or turn aside to reach them with something of Christianity's hope. Mother says she is going over to the little mud hut now. I wish I could help.

Yours,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XLI.

Dhamtari, C. P., India, March 19.

DEAR ANNA:—

How do you like this revised version of the old nursery rhyme? You know it's not just a made up jingle and not only "founded on fact" but actually, literally true.

Ride an ox-cart, thru narrow streets dart,
To see a young lady from all earth apart,
With rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
And so she makes music wherever she goes.

'Twas I who rode the ox-cart and 'twas I who darted thru the narrow streets to pass about a dozen heavy country carts (the farm wagon of the Central Provinces) loaded with nuts from the jungle. The young lady was a pretty, gentle, black-eyed little Mohammedan girl whose parents are of the better class and who because they are Mohammedans believe in keeping all their girls and women shut up like prisoners. And so this young girl is already a *zenana* or *purdah* woman. *Zenana* means the women's quarters and *purdah* means curtain—the idea in both words is that women are kept in concealment or secrecy. The Koran, or Mohammedan sacred writings, says that the best women are those who never remember seeing any man but their own

husbands and sons and the next best are those who have seen only near relatives. This secluding of women in almost prison-like apartments is the custom of the Hindus as well as of the Mohammedans of India and it is said that forty millions of women and girls are shut within their homes (houses I should say), away from other people, from nature, and from God.

These women not only live in the women's apartments, but must keep the face veiled when brothers-in-law are present, never be seen speaking to the husband in the daytime, never be seated in his presence, or never even pronounce his name. Such a woman never takes her meals with her husband,—her duty is to wait upon him and when he has finished eating, to eat what he leaves. If there are any children the boys eat with the father and after they have done the girls eat with the mother. If the family go anywhere (which is seldom) the husband always walks first, the wife heavily veiled follows and would never think of walking side by side with him much less arm in arm. One Hindu lady said, "The life of women in zenanas is like that of a frog in a well,—everywhere there is beauty, but we cannot see it—it is hid from us."

Most American women are left to themselves some part of each day, but we know we always have freedom; we can go out, we receive visits, we read and sew; and then toward evening the whole fam-



A Buffalo Cart

ily comes together and we are all happy and cheerful, using the same room, sitting around the same table, eating the same food, and talking freely as equals about our common joys and troubles and tasks. Nothing of that kind is possible for my "young lady." She has no freedom of action and very little freedom of thought. Can you imagine what a dull, cheerless, restricted existence hers is? Imagine your life without a book or a picture; with never a visit to your neighbor, nor a walk out of doors (except in a little back courtyard surrounded by a high brick wall) without elaborate arrangements being made to secure your privacy, nor even a look out of the window. Suppose you knew nothing of the Bible or of prayer or of a future life. When I try to think of myself in such a place it seems impossible! Considering her opportunities however this lady is superior. She is smiling and patient, always attractive and not unhappy, rather regarding her narrow and shut-in life as a sign of her high rank. But she says, "Come to see us often, we get so lonely."

And this "young lady" has finger rings, bangles on her arms, jewels in her ears and in her nose, necklaces, toe rings, and heavy gold and silver anklets with little bells that softly tinkle when she moves. Why don't the women at home cut holes in their noses for jewels and wear anklets and thumb rings? I don't see why it wouldn't be just

as nice or just as proper to wear an anklet as a bracelet. And I should think it would be just as beautiful and becoming and comfortable to wear nose rings as to wear earrings and they would show up to so much better advantage. And can you explain why they wear rings on their fingers and not on their thumbs? I think the custom of the Indian women is far more consistent,—they treat their hands and feet and noses and ears all alike. If I'd want to wear one sort of ring I'd wear the whole catalog, wouldn't you? But I just can't forget that "young lady from all earth apart." She's not as old as I am. I'll have to tell you more about her another time. Mother is making my school dresses, sandwiched in between house work, zenana visiting, and language study. I don't see how she does so much!

Ever your Cousin,

MARY.

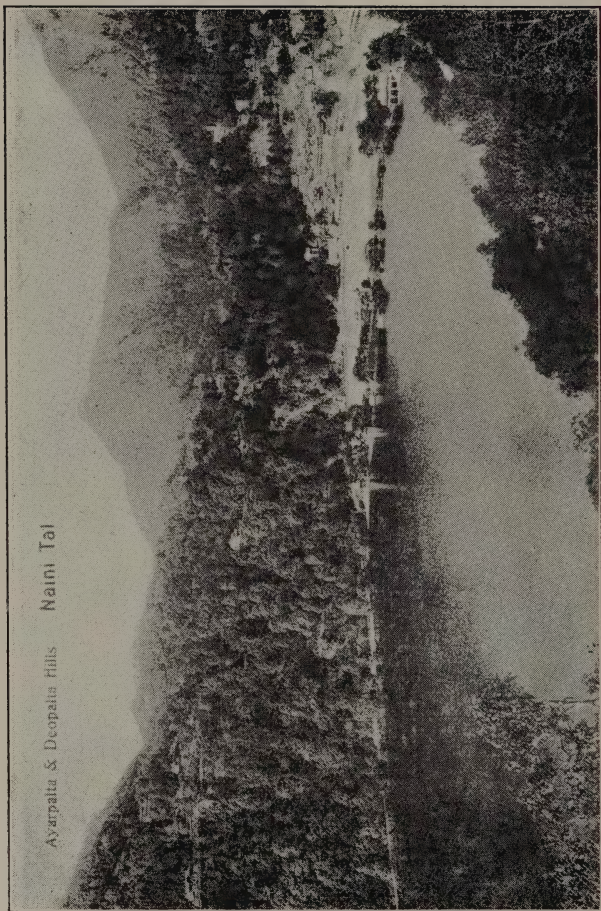
LETTER NO. XLII.

Naini Tal, India, March 26.

DEAR COUSIN AT HOME:—

As you see I am farther from home than ever, in Naini Tal ready for school, and already started at the task of getting acquainted with the other girls here. There are about one hundred, most of whom are English girls, children of government and railway employees and missionaries. Anna, I used to think I was perfectly familiar with the English language and could speak some of it at least but you would smile to hear me talking with these English girls and I suppose my speech sounds as curious and funny to them as theirs does to me. They think they are talking just plain English and I think I am and neither one is plain to the other.

Well if I should write all about our trip up here the letter wouldn't stay in an envelope. I didn't know there were such nice places in India. We came thru the ancient and notorious cities of Allahabad and Lucknow, and across the Jamuna and Ganges, two sacred rivers of the Hindus. Lucknow ranks fourth in size among Indian cities being next after Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras and it has a population about equal to that of Kansas City. From a distance it is picturesque and imposing in ap-



Naini Tal

pearance with minarets and domes on many of the large buildings. You know it was one of the chief scenes of the Sepoy mutiny in 1857. Sepoy is the name given to a British Indian soldier.

Allahabad is one of the chief resorts of Hindu pilgrims who come to have their sins washed away by bathing in the waters of the sacred rivers, Ganges and Jamuna, at their junction. The town is as old as the third century B. C. There were lots of interesting things to see but the sun was hot and after having changed trains six different times I was almost tired when the third morning our little train stopped, for the simple reason that it had run right up to the mountains and couldn't run any farther. And then we all got out—a number of school children and a teacher who helped us in traveling—and found big trucks (motor lorries they called them) waiting to start straight up the mountain side. James got in one truck and I found myself being tucked into another with nearly forty other girls.

Now I've been up steep hills before but never anything like that. The road wound in and out and up and higher along the hillsides with terrible looking precipices first on one side and then on the other, and over swift streams and falls that rushed and roared along the bottoms of deep gorges. Sometimes there were lovely little valleys, and open hillsides here and there were cultivated or planted in

fruit orchards; and then again there was dense jungle with huge trees and beautiful ferns.

After we had climbed a dozen or more zigs and as many zags we saw Naini Tal on a peak so high away it looked as if we never could reach it without wings. And then we turned back and forth several dozen more times, each turn taking us rapidly higher and higher with the scenery so beautiful it fairly hurt your eyes with its magnificence, when all at once there was another sudden turn and we were right in the first part of Naini Tal, a long, narrow street with queer little native shops on either side. One more turn and we saw the beautiful lake Naini (Tal means lake).

At the lake we separated from the boys, they going around the right bank of the lake and up a higher hill on that side to Philander Smith College and we following the left shore and up a hill to Wellesley School. There is a shorter, steeper, bridle road thirteen miles long, from Kathgodam where the railway ends but the good road is twenty-two miles.

I can see across the lake where James lives and it doesn't look to be half of the three miles distance it really is. The last Saturday afternoon of each month he can come over to see me and I can hardly wait until he gets here today. Next week more from

Your loving Cousin,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XLIII.

Naini Tal, India, March 31.

DEAR ANNA:—

When I get to thinking of you over in America and Father and Mother down on the plains, I feel as if I had migrated to one of the other planets and had neither wireless telegraphy nor flying machines for communication. But I must tell you a little about our school which is one of the best schools for girls in the hills. In the first place, it is not at all like yours. There are several fine stone buildings in the largest of which we live, eat, and sleep. On the second floor is our dormitory, one large room with a row of beds on either side and one of those beds is mine. There is a large dining room with long tables and a place at one of the tables is mine. That's the extent of the space allotted to me. Of course there are too many of us to make it possible for us to enjoy all the comforts of a home, but I do want a place to call my own sometimes besides under the bed covers.

The class rooms are the only thing that look like High School at home and the desks and seats for them have been shipped from America. When James comes over to see me we can sit together down in the sitting room. On Sundays we all march



Darjeeling Kinchunga.

No. 45

Darjeeling Kinchunga

down the hill to the Methodist Episcopal Church at the end of the lake. The boys attend there in a body too and James and I don't even get to see each other usually.

It is an American Methodist institution but pupils of any or no denomination are admitted; and the school is managed by people who themselves are Christian missionaries and who are doing a great deal without much thanks or money. There is a competent staff of teachers and they teach drawing, sewing, music and domestic science in addition to the ordinary studies. The Course of Studies is in accord with the examinations in England, and it will prepare for College at home. Beside the boarders there are a number of day scholars whose parents live here or whose mothers stay here during the school year.

I heard from one of the girls in school at Darjeeling, Queen's High School, yesterday. On clear mornings and evenings they can see the Snowy Range from their school. She says she can count more than a dozen peaks with perpetual snow, one of which is Kinchunjunga next to the highest mountain peak in the world. Mt. Everest is only about one hundred miles from them and can be seen by going to a hill seven miles from there.

But Anna, let her talk about the view from her dormitory being the most magnificent in the world, she hasn't any crystal clear lake surrounded by

picturesque hillsides. And Naini Tal is picturesque! This lake with a number of others not far away was probably formed by a glacier they say like the famous Pindari Glacier one hundred and twenty miles from here. I have an ambition to walk to this glacier sometime in the years to come Anna, and then I'll write a thoroughly reliable book on it. It wouldn't take more than eighteen days to make the trip and wouldn't it be more interesting than studying Physical Geography about ice floes and moraines and crevasses and neves? Just imagine an enormously thick sheet of ice several miles long with huge gaps filled with water and large slabs of rock and a stream of ice-cold water flowing from underneath the huge mountain of ice. But wait till I take the journey, just now I must do the studying.

Yours,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XLIV.

Naini Tal, India, April 7.

MY OWN DEAR COUSIN:—

I wish you could see this place. The whole town is built in terraces up the sides of the mountains that surround the bluest, clearest, willow fringed lake. It is one of the most attractive hill resorts of the outer Himalayas (and Anna, it is correct to accent the second syllable of that word, “him-mäh’-la-yahs”) they say. I can testify to its attractiveness anyhow. It is almost in the center of north India. Darjeeling where some of the missionary children are in school is southeast from here almost north of Calcutta. West of here on other ridges of the Himalayas are a number of other hill stations that have an agreeable climate where Europeans living in India for any length of time are obliged to go during the hot season and where there are schools for the children.

There are not many visitors here yet, that is, European people, but there are a lot of sturdy, dirty, independent looking people who are anything but handsome. They are supposed to be whitish yellow in color, but they certainly do not believe in the necessity of “tubbing” themselves very frequently and as a rule they are so covered with dirt and

smoke and grime that it's hard to even guess what complexion might be under the black outside. Some of the women are better looking with faces that are actually clean and with tidy hair.

These people come from the mountain countries north of India. Tibet, you know, is called the Gibraltar of the non-Christian world and in one place there is a gap of fifteen hundred miles between two of the missionary stations that surround it like a line of outposts. It is closed to all Christian work. I must say the hill people that are here are a 'sorry 'looking lot, living in tumbledown huts, thatched with straw, or roofed with old coal oil tins. It is said that Standard oil has been put in every village in India, anyhow, down on the plains, all along the way, and up here in the mountains, wherever I have been you can see the Standard oil tins. They seem to be literally everywhere. If people can go everywhere to take coal oil they could go to take the Bible, couldn't they? But they haven't yet, for Standard oil tins have been carried into hundreds of villages where the Bible has never been carried.

The religion of these people from the hills is Buddhism mixed with Paganism. It is they who do the really hard work of the place; they are the servants, coolies, drudges, "hewers of wood and drawers of water."

Naini Tal, that is the Lake, is 6,500 feet above sea level, and the hill on which our school is situ-

ated rises to a point about 7,500 feet high while on the other side of the lake there is a steep peak over



A Nepalese Coolie Woman

8,500 feet high. The Mall, a good carriage road and sidewalk, runs right round the lake over two miles in circumference, and beside it are located the

business houses, post and telegraph offices, churches, library, and a market. Then on the hillsides wherever a level spot big enough can be found, there are schools, hospitals, boarding houses, hotels, and cottages.

"You'll never miss your mother 'till she's gone." I've found out it's true, Anna. Mother is worth more than a hundred school teachers even tho these are Christian women and good and careful and I'm glad they're here. Mother is as different from them as can possibly be. This week I had the earache—and—well anyhow I cried for Mother and I didn't care. The feeling of wanting Mother hurt ever so much more than the pain of earache. I wonder if Mother wants me as badly as I want her sometimes, and I wonder how often I'll cry for her this year and how often she'll be lonesome for me.

Your cousin,

MARY.

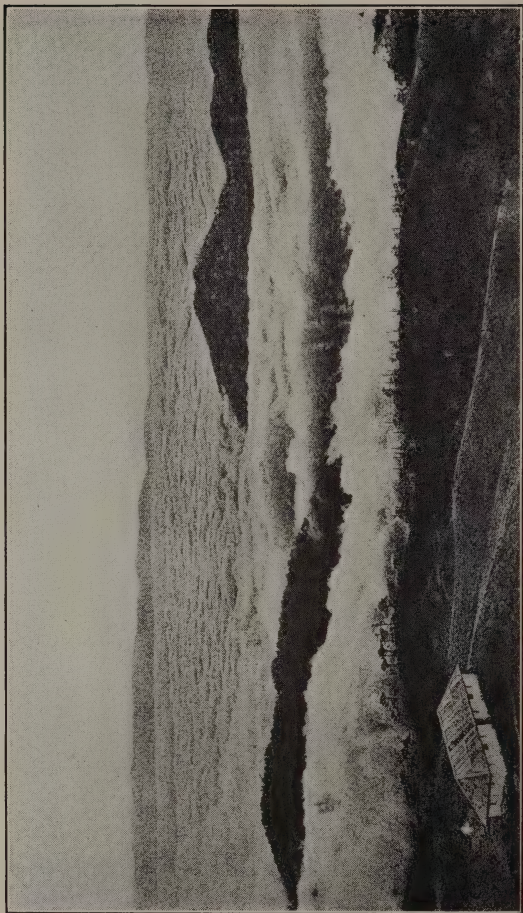
LETTER NO. XLV.

Naini Tal, India, April 14.

DEAR COUSIN:—

Since last I wrote you I've had the feeling of looking *almost* straight down 2,000 feet—nearly half a mile. Mother had hold of my hand and looked straight down 1000 feet on the other side of the narrow divide on which we were standing. On my side there was a full view of the ridges and sloping hills and the plains beyond and the sight was well worth the trouble it took to climb to the top of one of the highest peaks here. One can see a distance of seventy miles down the valley, it is said. When we first reached there the whole scene was bathed in the brightest sunshine, but before we knew it the mists came surging up and around us shutting the view out completely and we seemed to be looking out across an ocean which was only a sea of clouds.

You see Father and Mother came up here the other day for two months and while they are here we are living with them in two rooms of a cottage. Another missionary family has the other two rooms. Our cottage is perched on a tiny ledge right in what was a rather thick bushy jungle. Directly back of the house is a rocky wall towering higher than the house itself and if you were to step out of



A Sea of Clouds

the front door yard you would land abruptly on the next story ledge below us. A narrow dahlia-bordered path winds up between beautiful silver oak and great flowering rhododendron trees and not another house can be seen from the spot. The whole hill is better than a show or circus as there is a big troop of black-faced silver monkeys whose antics are very amusing as they swing through the trees. James and I have sought a closer acquaintance with them but they seem to have no such desire whatever.

Just this evening James and I started out after them again but the more rapidly we went the more the distance between us increased. At last we came to a deep gorge with an absolutely unreachable bottom for us and I was glad to stop and follow the zigzag path back home as soon as I found it. I left James sitting on the limb of some nut tree waiting for the monkeys to return that way—but they didn't. We were almost three miles from home. It's so interesting to see the mother monkeys, with their babies holding tight around their necks, jumping and leaping from tree to tree. The little ones scream and cry just like a timid child when they see us and then the old mothers hug and kiss them to quiet their fears.

I told you Hindus will not kill even a poisonous snake. It is because of the Hindu doctrine of transmigration according to which men may pass through a weary round of 8,400,000 human, animal,

and plant lives. Animal worship is common, while the cow, and next to her, the bull are held in highest veneration; the monkey is also regarded as sacred and is largely worshiped in some parts of India. Living monkeys are regarded as representatives of Hanuman, a monkey chief believed to be divine, and so, many temples swarm with monkeys. It is considered a meritorious act to feed them and a sacrilegious act to injure them.

The weather is fine with a temperature of about sixty-five degrees, the air is bracing, and my cheeks are just puffing with health.

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XLVI.

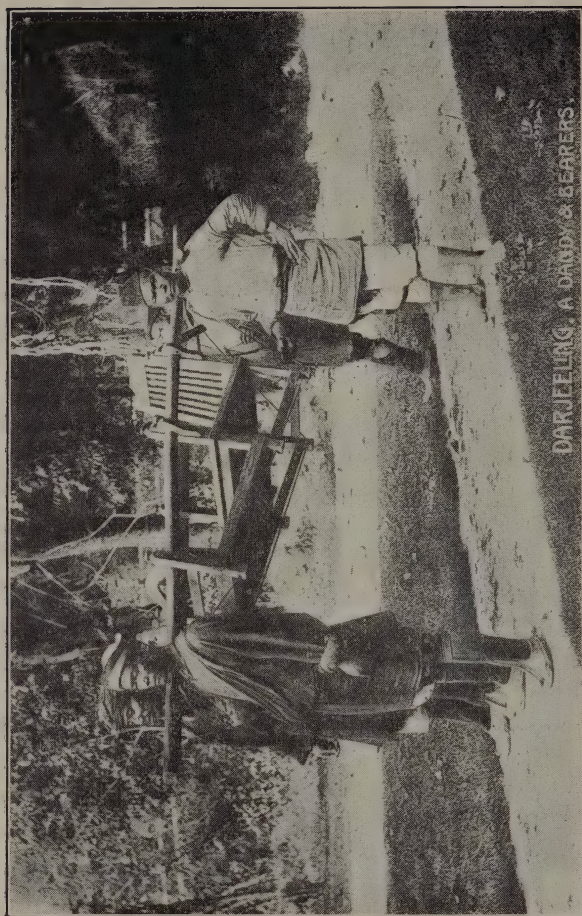
Naini Tal, India, April 21.

DEAREST ANNA:—

Now an aviation trip and an elephant-back ride and I ought soon to have completed the list of modes of travel. A pony and dandy are the means of conveyance best suited to this hilly district. But the pony's name isn't Dandy. The roads with the exception of the Mall around the lake and a very few others are impassable for an auto, a horse and carriage, or even a rickshaw and the only mode of travel is afoot or a dandy.

A dandy is a box-like contrivance in which you sit and feel like a fly going up the wall of a room while four coolies carry you on their shoulders up the steepest paths. It is more comfortable than it might seem and the way these tough hill men swing you up is really wonderful.

James and I have had several holidays and we have all taken excursions on those days, exploring off the beaten track, and discovering things. We took a dandy so there would be someone to carry our food and water and because Mother is not a very good walker and tires easily. A descent or ascent of a thousand feet in a distance of one mile makes a steep, rough road and walking is not at all



A Dandy and Bearers

easy. We all carry good bamboo "khud" sticks with a steel point for climbing. And scenery more varied could not well be imagined. The remembrance of the Rocky Mountain country seems nothing compared with these mighty Himalayas. The Snowy Range cannot be seen from our cottage or from either of the schools but we had a fine view of it yesterday and had a picnic dinner while looking at the perpetual snows.

James says he wishes we could have a picnic every day and have no school on picnic days. He's more interested in the place and new things than in school, but I'm trying to study so as to rank first in my class this year and it's going to take some good, hard work.

The hills are just covered with such flowers as buttercups, primroses, wild roses, wild begonias, wild dahlias, violets, anemone, iris, lilies of the valley, honeysuckles, daisies, lantana, and bluebells. Then there are many very peculiar and wonderful flowers and plants whose names I do not know. They don't study botany here and I forgot my old text book in America. A bright flower with pretty leaves grows right on the solid stone walls wherever a bit of hold can be had. It must be a wall-flower and it makes me think of Tennyson's,

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand

What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

Then the brilliant, fragrant orchids are so wonderful and curious. They are quite plentiful, some growing in the ground; others upon tree trunks, obtaining all their nourishment from the air; and a third class growing as parasites on the trees. I wish I could send you a bushel basket of them. A tree rhododendron grows as high as twenty-five feet and has beautiful scarlet flowers and silvery looking leaves. We saw some holly shrubs too but this is not the season for the berries.

And such ferns! Maidenhair ferns, silver ferns, and about a dozen kinds of dainty, exquisite, little ferns beside the larger ones, I have seen. And such mosses and lichens! I'd send you a great armful of maidenhair ferns with the rare orchids if I could. It makes one want to love God more to see so many wonderful things He has created.

Lovingly yours,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XLVII.

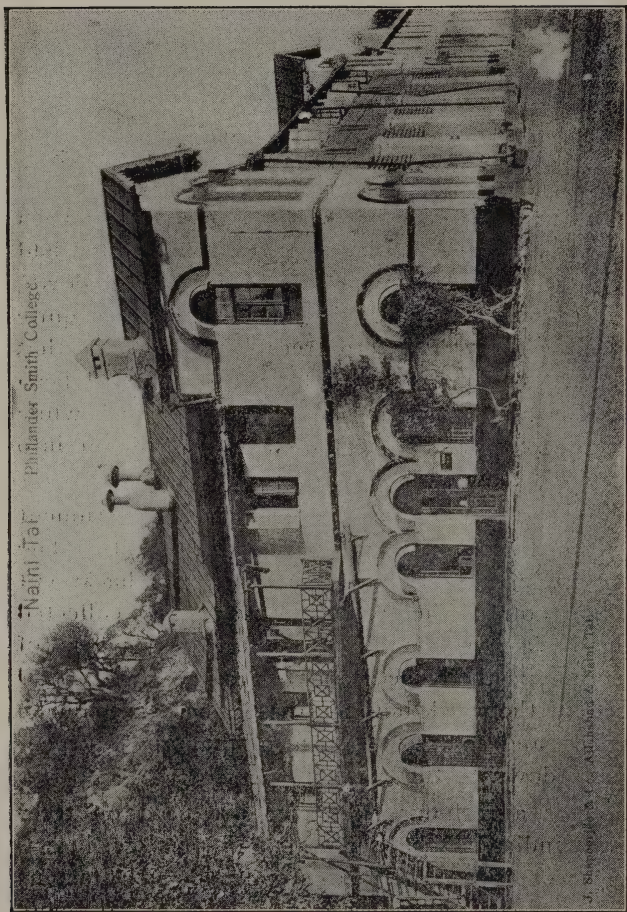
Naini Tal, India, April 28.

DEAR ANNA:—

On our last picnic trip we had to cross the path of an avalanche of mud and large stones that had broken off from the high cliffs above, rolled down, and filled up the road. It must have been quite a landslide for there were trees lying beneath that had been torn up by the roots. The road had been repaired again but if it should have slipped while we were there we too would have gone down into the ravine below with its foaming torrent.

About six miles out we visited a Government turpentine factory situated in the pine forests. The sap or crude turpentine was flowing from hacks cut near the roots of the trees, and was being collected in small clay vessels. Our doctors use spirits of turpentine in their medical work and a great deal is used in the workshop for dissolving lac to make varnishes, and so we had some of that good turpentine sent down to the Mission.

Lac is a resinous substance produced on trees here in India by the secretions of the lac insect. This insect is a scale-like creature which fastens itself to a twig and dies leaving a *lac* (*lac*, or more properly, *lakh*, is an Indian term representing 100,-



One of the Buildings of James' School

000) or multitudes of young that swarm on the bark and immediately begin to secrete this resinous substance themselves. Down about Dhamtari some attention is given to the cultivation of the lac insect and the bark and twigs covered with this gum and dead bodies of the insects are shipped. The bodies are blood red and I have seen twigs covered to a depth of half an inch with the substance. I enjoyed seeing the workshop manager put them in hot water to dissolve the coloring matter and then mix the resin with turpentine to make varnish. I have a nice teak wood box shaped just like a small suitcase and used for one, that I watched them make in the shop from the beginning, when the big logs were hauled in from the jungle. It is finished with this "home made" varnish and it is nicely finished too.

Many tea plantations have been formed up here on the hills where they have been cleared of forest. We visited one large tea garden and saw the rows of plants about two feet high. The planter explained each process of manufacture to us and it was very interesting indeed.

In the evening the tea pluckers come in with their baskets of leaf, which is the young and tender shoots of the plant. It is all spread out thinly on wire trays to wither. The next morning the leaf is put into rolling machines and rolled to crush the leaves and bring out the juice. Then it is prepared for fermentation which process is stopped at just the

proper time, when the leaf is rolled again and dried. Next it is left to cool, is sorted, and finally packed in air-tight boxes. We each had a cup of the tea just made and it was delicious. India tea you know is one of the best.

The cultivation of cinchona is an important industry of the lower Himalayas too, but not just in this district. You know from the bark of the cinchona trees they obtain quinine, so much of which is used in curing malaria fever very prevalent here in India. The quinine is sold to the people thru the Government Post Offices at a price so that the poorest can buy it. But even then few do buy because they are so superstitious.

I have just learned that ignorant pilgrims often make long, hard journeys up to the Himalaya mountains to worship supposed holy places here. One such sacred place is the source of the Ganges River which emerges from an ice cave at the foot of a bed of snow 14,000 feet above the level of the sea. Eight miles from the cave is a temple visited by pilgrims who regard it as the source of the holy water of the river. There they get flasks filled with the sacred water of the river. These flasks are sealed by the Brahman priests and are carried away to the plains as great treasures.

I'm glad we don't have to go on long pilgrimages to worship our Father in heaven, aren't you? And I'm glad He is always ready to listen to us wherever we are. For "The Most High dwelleth not in

temples made with hands. He is not far from anyone of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being."

But suppose you were an Indian girl and didn't know this?

Lovingly,

MARY.

LETTER NO. XLVIII.

Naini Tal, India, May 6.

DEAREST ANNA:—

Just a year ago today we left America. Anna, it has been a busy year and now as I think back it has been a very good, happy year. I've become interested in India and in our own Menonite Mission



A Group from the Workshop

here. I've learned many things about missionary work. I've seen some of the numberless opportunities for service everywhere. I've widened my horizon. But Anna, the greatest thing is that I've decided to give my services here, to help in our Mission, to share in the wonderful work of bringing

the knowledge of the God of love to the people of India. Such needy people they are! Why Anna, they need everything you can think of.

I'm not so much a missionary that I'm not going to respect the work and aims or appreciate the ideals of the girls who are not planning to be missionaries. But Anna, anybody who calls himself a Christian and isn't interested in missions is selfishness itself I think.

I do wish there were some way of making things over here real to the people at home. People are interested in the things that they know about, and when they don't know anything about India and South America and Mexico and other countries, how can they be interested in them? I used to read all the missionary books I ever saw, and listened to all the missionaries who ever came to our church house, but I never would be one myself if I hadn't learned the real need. And I think there ought to be some way of letting us Mennonite young folks find out more about real mission work where there is such need. Couldn't the girls have a sort of Mission Study Society, to find out all they could, to get a lot of books and papers and missionary literature to prepare papers and have discussions at their meetings and change their minds about mission folk being another kind of people from themselves and mission work being altogether different from Church work at home? And I

don't believe people at home know how the people here expect them to pray for missicn work. They haven't commenced to do what they could in that way I don't believe. I used to wonder how praying



A Missionary Family
Do you know them?

in America could change things in India, and I don't know much about it yet, I just know it *does*.

And Anna, if ever you hear people say any-

thing against foreign missions, don't you believe it—they never were on a foreign mission field and don't know anything about it.

I'm sending you some pictures Mother brought up for me and I wish they were as interesting to you as they are to me. Two of the men in the carpenter group are blind, one is deaf, and one has a leg amputated. All are Christians but one who is a Mohammedan. All but four can read and write and the blind ones are not of the four,—they read their Bibles with raised letters.

If I do not write you so many letters next year you must remember that I am working with all my heart and mind to get ready and better fitted for the place down on the plains of India that is waiting for me. And there are places waiting for some other young people too.

Always your loving cousin,

MARY.

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